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THEOSOPHICAL HISTORY

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Theosophical History (ISSN 0951-497X) is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October by the Theosophical History Foundation. The journal's purpose is to publish contributions specifically related to the modern Theosophical Movement, from the time of Madame Helena Blavatsky and others who were responsible in establishing the original Theosophical Society (1875), to all groups that derive their teachings - directly or indirectly, knowingly or unknowingly - from her or her immediate followers. In addition, the journal is also receptive to related movements (including pre-Blavatskyite Theosophy, Spiritualism, Rosicrucianism, and the philosophy of Emanuel Swedenborg to give but a few examples) that have had an influence on or displayed an affinity to modern Theosophy.

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There is no limitation on the length of manuscripts. In general, articles of 30 pages or less will be published in full; articles in excess of 30 pages may be published serially.

Brief communications, review articles, and book reviews are welcome. They should be submitted double-spaced.

All correspondence, manuscripts, and subscriptions should be sent to:

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Editor's Comments

In This Issue

In an effort to bring *Theosophical History* up to date in a more expeditious manner, both the July and October issues have been herein combined. Readers' views are welcomed if they wish to comment on this format. Future issues may on rare occasion appear as double numbers in order to avoid dividing an exceptionally long article over two or more issues. It is hoped that readers will approve this format rather than wait for the second part of an article to appear in the following issue.

The contents herein include a mix of offerings, including articles by Michael Gomes, Henk Spierenburg, and Daniel Caracostea. In addition, three pieces of historical interest are reprinted: one a pamphlet by W.T. Brown, entitled *Some Experiences in India*, the other two an article and editorial from the pages of the *New York World*. Three book reviews also appear in this issue: Robin Waterfield's *Rene Guénon*, Alain Daniélou's *The Way to the Labyrinth: Memories of East and West*, and Radha Rajagopal Sloss' *Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti*. Mr. Gomes' article, "Mabel Collins' *Romance of the White Lotus*," discusses Miss Collins' explanation of her theosophical compositions, with special reference to the discarded 1882 version of Chapter 7 of the novella *Romance of the White Lotus*. Mabel Collins (1851-1927) is best known for *Light on the Path*, but it may interest residents of California that she is also the author of *The Story of Helena Modjeska (Madame Chiapowska)* [London: W.H. Allen & Co., 1885, 2nd edn.], a well-known Polish actress and founder (in 1876) of a short-lived art commune in Orange County, California.

Michael Gomes, an historian of the Theosophical Society best known for his well-received *Dawning of the Theosophical Movement* [Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1987], is the author of a sizable number of articles on various facets of theosophical history, including "The Coulomb Case, 1884-1984" (*The Theosophist*, Dec. 1984 - Feb. 1986) and "The History of a Humbug" (*The Canadian Theosophist*, Sept. 1984 - Feb. 1986), the latter containing eleven previously unknown letters of H.P. Blavatsky to Elliott Coues. His long awaited annotated bibliography, *Theosophy in the Nineteenth Century*, published by Garland Publishing, is due out in June 1992. Mr. Gomes is presently on academic leave from Columbia University in order to engage in his research interests in India.

Dr. Spierenburg and Mr. van Egmond's article, "The Succession of H.P. Blavatsky: A Documentary History," is a compilation of "official documents" that shed light on this subject. Readers are probably familiar with Dr. Spierenburg's articles in *Theosophical History* I/7,8 and II/1,2,5 as well as his recently published *The Buddhism of H.P. Blavatsky* (Point Loma Publications), announced in *TH* III/5:134.

Daniel Caracostea, the author of "Alexandra David-Neel's Early Acquaintance with Theosophy: Paris 1892," presents herein a letter discovered in the archives of the Theosophical Society in Paris from Alexandra David-Neel to G.R.S. Mead, the General Secretary of the European Section. Mme. David-Neel [1868-1969, she married Philippe Neel in 1904], an intrepid traveler to Tibet and other parts of Asia in her pursuit

of Buddhist wisdom, is the author of more than forty books, including *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (N.Y.: C. Kendall, 1932), *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet* (London: John Lane, 1931), *Voyage d'un Parisienne a Lhassa* (Paris: Plon, 1927), and *The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects* (Calcutta: Maha Bodhi Society of India, 1971, co-authored with Lama Yongden) that detail her experiences.

Mr. Caracostea is perhaps best known as a member of the editorial staff and frequent contributor to *Le Lotus Bleu* on the history of Theosophy in France and the translator of Subba Row's "Notes on the Bhagavad-Gītā" into French. Born into a family of theosophists (T.S. Adyar), Mr. Caracostea is a bookbinder by profession. The translator of the article, Diana Dunningham-Chapotin, was a few years previous on the staff at the Krotona Institute in Ojai, California. She currently lives in France.

W.T. Brown's *Some Experiences in India*, first published in 1884, comes by way of the archives of the Society of Psychical Research. Our gratitude is extended to the S.P.R. for allowing the pamphlet to appear in this issue and to Leslie Price for uncovering this important document. Since its inception in 1985, *Theosophical History* has regularly included documents originating therein, and we see no reason why this practice should be discontinued. This is the first of three pamphlets written by Brown that will eventually appear in this journal: the other two being *My Life* and *The Theosophical Society: An Explanatory Treatise*. As the reader will discover upon reading *Some Experiences*, W.T. Brown claimed in no uncertain terms to have beheld (in 1883 and 1884), the Mahatmas Koot Hoomi *in propria persona* and to have received letters from the same. The pamphlet presented herein is very rare indeed since Georges Meautis remarked in a 1954 article "Those

Who Have Seen Them" (published in *The Theosophist*, January 1956: 262f. and first appearing in the French original in *Lotus Bleu*, 1954, no. 6) that it

is not in the library of the English Section, and it is not in the British Museum. There is a copy in the Adyar Library, but unfortunately it was mutilated, as owing to faulty rebinding one or two lines are missing at the end of some of the pages. It is to be hoped that another copy will be discovered, so that the missing text can be filled in.

Readers who wish additional secondary information on Brown's experiences may consult, besides Meautis' article, H.S. Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves* (III: 21f.) and Katherine A. Beechey's "Some Little-Known Letters of the Master Koot Hoomi" (*The Theosophist*, 75/2 [November 1957]: 129-32).

"The New York School of Magic" and "Levitation and Other Light Matters" both appeared in the March 27 (Tuesday) edition of the *New York World*. They served as a follow up to the article, "A Lamasery in New York," which appeared the previous day. Who the correspondent was is not revealed.

Book Notes

Kabbalah: New Perspectives by Moshe Idel (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988) is a major work that challenges many of the basic assumptions and conclusions of the foremost scholar on Kabbalistic studies in the twentieth century, Gershom Scholem. Mr. Idel, now an associate professor of Jewish thought at Hebrew University (Jerusalem) includes chapters on the state of Kabbalah scholarship, varieties of *devekut* ("a call upon the Jew to strengthen the

bond between himself and God”: 38) in Jewish mysticism, mystical union and techniques leading to this union, Kabbalistic theosophy [*theosophy* referring here to “manifestations that are either part of the divine structure or directly related to the divine essence, serving as its vessels or instruments...”, 112], and on the evolution from Jewish Esotericism to European Philosophy. The price of this 464 page book is \$40.00.

The Maha Bodhi Society’s celebration of its one hundredth anniversary and the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of the birth of its founder, Anagarika Dharmapala, can now be shared its publication of the *Centenary Souvenir*. Among the articles that appear in this publication is Michael Gomes’ “Anagarika Dharmapala and the Theosophical Society”, Suniti Kumar Chatterji’s “Dharmapala and the Cultural Renaissance in India and Ceylon”, and Dr. G. John Samuel’s “Indigenisation of Buddhism in Tamil Nadu.” Copies may be obtained from The Maha Bodhi Society (17, Kennet Lane, Egmore, Madras 600 008 India).

Skoob Books Publishing Ltd, an outgrowth of the London secondhand bookshop Skoob Books Ltd, has published or is in the act of publishing a number of interesting works, among which are Kenneth Grant’s *The Magical Revival* and *Remembering Aleister Crowley*. According to the catalogue description, *The Magical Revival* “contains a detailed analysis of certain occult traditions which...have reappeared in recent times.... The continuity of this magical current as reflected in the work of Aleister Crowley, Austin Spare, Dion Fortune and others is here traced through the Tantric Tradition of the Far East, the Sumerian Cult of Shaitan and the Draconian, Sabean, or Typhonian rites of the ‘dark’: dynasties of ancient Egypt.” The second book is a “memoir of the personal relationship between Kenneth

Grant and Aleister Crowley in Crowley’s latter years. These books may be ordered from Skoob directly (11a-15 Sicilian Ave., London WC1A 2QH), or from their agents (U.K. distributor: Gazelle Book Services Ltd, Falcon House, Queen Square, Lancaster LA1 1RN; U.S. distributor: New Leaf Distributing Co. 5425 Tulane Drive S.W., Atlanta, GA 30336-2323). We hope to include reviews of these books in due course.

The State University of New York Press (SUNY) has recently announced the publication of Bernadette Roberts’ book, *The Path to No-Self*, which maintains that the spiritual journey moves beyond the “transcendence of the self center or ego,” beyond the “abiding awareness of oneness with God.” The book “verifies a path beyond union ” and that it “exists between the transcendence of the ego (self-center)...and the later falling away of all self.” One may order the book directly from SUNY (c/o CUP Services, P.O. Box 6525, Ithaca, N.Y. 14851). The price is \$12.95 (paperback) and \$39.50 (hardcover).

SUNY also has announced the forthcoming publication of Carl W. Ernst’s *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*. This book describes the “mystical teachings and practices of the *Chishti* Sufi order as taught by the Shaykh Burhān al-Din Gharib (d.1337) and his disciples.” Dr. Ernst is a specialist in classical Sufism and Indo-Muslim culture and is an Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Religion at Pomona College in Claremont, California.

Larson Publications (4936 Route 414, Burdett, New York, U.S.A.) has announced two forthcoming publications of interest: *Sacred Paths: Essays on Wisdom, Love, and Mystical Realization* by Georg Feuerstein (ISBN 0-943914-56-6, \$14.95), a book on “yoga, tantra, and vedanta, and what they mean for people today,” and a new edition

of Stephen MacKenna's *Plotinus: The Enneads*. According to the catalogue description:

Stephen MacKenna worked on only the first of the four editions of *The Enneads* translation bearing his name.... Since in general the fourth edition is the superior text, we use that edition as our main text. In passages where changes may be questionable, however, we show (in footnotes) how MacKenna originally translated them. Endnotes also show, where relevant, how other major translators (e.g., Guthrie, Taylor, Armstrong, Deck) handled them with comments when needed.

Both books may already be in print if the publisher kept to its schedule.

Subscriptions

Beginning with this issue, the new subscription rates take effect.

U.S. and Canada	\$14
Overseas (surface)	\$16
Overseas (airmail)	\$24
Single issues	\$4

Until further notice, subscriptions may be payable in British Sterling, French and Swiss francs, and German marks.

All checks and money orders should be made payable to **James Santucci**.

U.K. Subscribers

An arrangement has been made with Mr. Michael Rainger of the Quest Bookshop (12 Bury Place, London) for him to accept subscriptions to *Theosophical History*. Checks or money orders

payable to *Theosophical History* for the amount of £11 for four issues.

Theosophical History Conference

Arrangements for the International Theosophical History Conference at Point Loma Nazarene College from 12 - 14 June 1992 are nearly complete. The indulgence of the participants and attenders is requested in two matters.

First, adjustments in accommodations and meals were made by the College. They are the following:

Breakfast:	\$3.75	(rather than \$3.50)
Lunch:	\$4.75	(rather than \$4.50)
Lodging:	\$16.00	(rather than \$15.00)

[Note: Linens per person remain at \$7.50 per stay, *i.e.* whether the lodger arranges either a one or two day stay]

Banquet: the tentative price is \$10.00. Since, however, the meal will be vegetarian, the caterer may request a higher figure, not to exceed \$15.00.

Should you wish to arranging for all meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and lodging, the total price per day will be **\$64.00**.

My apologies for these changes.

P.L.N.C. has requested that I finalize the number for lodging and food services no later than ninety days prior to the Conference. If you wish to stay at Finch Hall or use the food services, please notify me as soon as possible. I cannot guarantee accommodations should requests arrive later than **March 31**. Please fax (714-773-3990) or telephone (714-773-3727) me of your attentions.

Correction

In the III/6 issue of *Theosophical History* (page 156), I inadvertently erred in describing Dara Eklund's and Nicholas Weeks' current research activity to be that of revising their index of the *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* to include *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*. Rather, Mrs. Eklund writes that they are presently compiling the index for the *Echoes of the Orient* series.

Correspondence

From Daniël van Egmond (The Netherlands)

I like to express, first of all, my gratitude to you for reviving *Theosophical History* in such a splendid and well-balanced form. Next, I wish to respond to Mr. Robert Dulaney's letter in *TH* III/4 re Rudolf Steiner. In the German language two excellent books are available in which Steiner's relationship to the T.S. is quite fully dealt with. [Therein,... all papers of his Esoteric Section are published [i.e. the Esoteric Section of the T.S. of which he was the German secretary] as well as many letters from A. Besant and other important members. Furthermore, a quite good description is given of the problems between Steiner and the T.S. officials. This description is less one-sided than is usually the case in books published by the Anthroposophical Society. The books are part of the *Gesamtausgabe (Collected Writings)* of Rudolf Steiner: *Rudolf Steiner - Zur Geschichte der Esoterischen Schule I & II: GA 264-265*, Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 1904, 1907. Vol. I is the most important in view of Mr. Dulaney's question.

*At my behest, Miss Eileen Lloyd of the journal Anthroposophy Today (London) forwarded information on the contents of GA 264 and 265 (no English translation is believed to exist). Both numbers cover the years 1904 to 1914. Pertinent in 264 is the section **Zur Geschichte der Gliederung der Esoterischen Schule of Theosophy in eine östliche und westliche Schule im Jahre 1907**. Contents include "Drei Briefe im Zusammenhang mit dem sogenannten Fall Leadbeater, durch den die Trennung von der Esoterischen Schule of Theosophy eingeleitet wurde/Elf Briefe und ein Aufsatz im Zusammenhang mit*

der Wahl von Annie Besant, Leiterin der Esoterischen Schule, zur Präsidentin der Theosophischen Gesellschaft, was zur Trennung von der Esoteric School führte..."

The contents of GA 265 is briefly described in the following excerpt: "Die mit diesem Band vorliegende Dokumentation gilt der äusseren und inner Geschichte von Steiners erkenntnis-kultischem Arbeitskreis, der die zweite und dritte Abteilung seiner Esoterischen Schule 1904 bis 1914 bildete."

It may interest readers that Rudi Lissau, a member of the Council of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain, contributed a seven part article entitled "In Search of Rudolf Steiner" in Anthroposophy Today (No. 1, Summer 1986, to No. 7, Summer 1989). Interested readers wishing further information may write to Miss Eileen Lloyd (36 Church Walk, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8HH, England).

From Geoffrey Farthing (Surrey, England)

I read with interest the July 1991 number of *Theosophical History* and in particular Joscelyn Godwin's "The Hidden Hand, Part 2: The Brotherhood of Light." Having read it I wondered if Joscelyn Godwin had read of the notice which the Master Koot Hoomi had taken of the Secret School mentioned in the Mahatma Letters, page 209/210, second edition, where reference is made to a club with a dozen or so enthusiastic members under the leadership of Lord Lytton's father and of which Eliphas Levi, Regazzoni, and the Kopt Zergvan-Bey were named as members. In the letter there

is the sentence “I visited it about half a dozen times, and perceived from the first that there was and could be nothing in it. This was because of the pestilent London atmosphere.” Then follows a criticism of the British T.S.

From Jean Overton Fuller (Northamptonshire, England)

I have read Paul Johnson’s book *In Search of the Masters*, but am unable to share Gregory Tillett’s admiration of his methodology. [Editor’s note: Dr. Tillett’s review appears in TH III/5.]

His principal aim, like that of most Gurdjieffians, appears to be to transfer the source of Mme. Blavatsky’s inspiration from Buddhism to Islam. A serious flaw in his method is that to do this he makes frequent reference to her association with Copts and with persons and things Egyptian, even where it is obvious that ancient Egyptian is meant, without ever once warning the reader that the blood of the ancient Egyptians flows in the Copts, who became, at an early date, Christians and took Greek names. The Arab race that has moved in and become dominant is of the religion of Islam, which forbids the making of sculptured or painted images of deities or even people and is totally out of sympathy with the old religion of the country, with its animal-headed, anthropomorphic pantheon. To adduce any organisation with “Luxor”: in its title as evidence of a connection with Islam is wrong. To perceive the sleight of hand involved in the arguments of this type is to see a great part of Paul Johnson’s case fall away.

A second respect in which I criticise his method, is in his persistent use of *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindoostan*, pseudonymously signed Hadji Mora, to refute statements made by Mme. Blavatsky to Sinnett and to Countess

Constance Wachtmeister, without mentioning her warning that work under her Hadji Mora pseudonym is a good deal fictionalised.

His suggestion that the “Master Morya” whom she met in London was the Italian patriot Giuseppe Mazzini seems to me wild. She would have sympathised with Mazzini, but neither in physique nor in temperament did he in any way resemble Morya. Mazzini was essentially a man of the pen, writer, founder of two newspapers and editor of another; he was the theoretician of the Risorgimento rather than a man of action, not a man to inspire the devotion she had for “Master.”

I find myself frequently cited but sometimes for things I have not said. On page 140, he says I make Morya both a Rajput Singh and a Nepalese Buddhist; but I do not. I see him as born a Rajput, who however entered at one moment into the train of the Rajah of Nepal before moving to Tibet. Paul Johnson makes earlier a kindred error when he says on page 115 that I say Morya and Koot Hoomi were members of the Gelugpa brotherhood. On the contrary, if he looked [on] page 25, he would see that I distinguished them, by their long hair, from the monks, with their shaven heads.

References to one’s own name catch one’s eye, but these instances cause me to wonder with how much accuracy other writers are cited in Paul Johnson’s work.

I wish he would not class me amongst those who, he says, want their “heroine” virgin. I would have been only too happy for her to have had a full woman’s life and would not have minded her having an illegitimate child (though I would have been sorry if, having had one, she lied about it) but all the evidence appeared to me against her having been capable of bearing one. I have never considered virginity a requisite of spiritual illumi-

nation. Mrs. Besant was not a virgin (though I feel that she, too, was a little under-developed in respect of one side of life); neither, it appears, was Krishnamurti.

Paul Johnson is making me sail under what, if I made no protest, would be false colours.

Paul Johnson responds:

In a previous letter to *TH*, Miss Fuller called the study of Sufi links to Gurdjieff and H.P.B. “an attempted takeover by an element alien inimical to our Masters teachings.” Now she warns of a “principal aim, like that of most Gurdjieffians...to transfer the source of Mme. Blavatsky’s inspiration from Buddhism to Islam.” In fact, few Gurdjieffians have much interest in H.P.B. or even in the relative influence of Buddhism and Islam on Gurdjieff himself. *In Search of the Masters* is not the work of an enemy agent on a subversive mission, but of a Theosophist searching for truth. Rather than trying to define the source of H.P.B.’s inspiration, it identifies many different sources: Buddhists, Rosicrucians and Freemasons in Book I; Sufis and Jews in book II; Hindus and Sikhs in Books III and IV; others less readily classified throughout. Of the dozen characters indicated as having the greatest influence on H.P.B., only one is Muslim; he is introduced as her means of access to a pre-Islamic document, the *Chaldean Book of Numbers*. Even the discussion of Egypt identifies mostly non-Muslim Masters. The last chapter’s personal account of Hindu/Muslim conflict in Kashmir has an unmistakably pro-Hindu slant. All these factors make the book an unlikely product of the Islamic takeover plot Miss Fuller imagines.

Caves and Jungles of Hindustan, signed Radda-Bai, has been too long overlooked as a source of clues regarding the Masters. But while my book cites it frequently, it is not presented as

pure non-fiction. Immediately following the first discussion of *Caves and Jungles*, its semi-fictional status is explained by Olcott in a lengthy quotation from *Old Diary Leaves*.

Maharaja Rangir Singh of Kashmir, identified as Master Morya by *In Search of the Masters*, corresponds in appearance, temperament, surname, caste, and religion to descriptions of M. given by the Founders. Mazzini is proposed solely as the M. (not Morya) whom H.P.B. met in London in 1851, on the basis of evidence from five different sources. The book clearly suggests that the Morya/London episode was a blind, combining aspects of two characters.

Two of three complaints about my references to Miss Fuller’s book are valid. It would be more accurate to say that she attempts to reconcile the Rajput Singh and Nepalese Buddhist versions of M. rather than simply that she accepts both. And it would be more accurate to say “allied to” or “associated with” the Gelugpa brotherhood rather than “members of” it which she never asserts. However, these regrettable misstatements are matters of nuance rather than substance. The passage on her discussion of H.P.B.’s sexuality (p. 28) nowhere claims she is biased toward the virginity hypothesis but implies that she will please those who are. The passage about “Theosophists, eager to believe in the virginity of their beloved leader” (p. 38) does not refer to any individual.

Gregory Tillett responds:

Miss Overton Fuller’s preoccupation with Blavatskian hagiography makes it virtually impossible for her to objectively consider anything venturing beyond the orthodox canon of Theosophy. In this case, her attempt at undermining Paul Johnson’s scholarly labours is built on trivia. Even

allowing for the minor errors she has identified, the underlying hypothesis remains unchallenged.

On the basis of Miss Overton Fuller's method of criticism, one might well write off her own books. Taking one off the shelf at random - it happened to be her study of Victor Neuburg - it took no effort to locate a handful of factual errors. Presumably she must agree that this undermines the methodology of that work?

Where the game of trivial pursuit fails, Miss Overton Fuller attacks on the basis that Johnson's "principal aim" which is "like that of most Gurdjieffans."

And, for good measure, a defence of Blavatsky's alleged virginity.

I am reminded of a conversation with one of the leaders of the Adyar Society when I was undertaking research on Leadbeater. She denounced Nethercott's biography of Besant as "full of lies." After a long and painful (for me at least) questioning, the lies were disclosed as being three minor errors of fact. However, those totally undermined the book, its methodology and its author!

Paul Johnson's book is, as my review noted, flawed in a number of minor ways, none of them immediately relevant to his interesting, if unproven, central hypothesis.

MABEL COLLINS' "ROMANCE OF THE WHITE LOTUS"¹

Michael Gomes

Mabel Collins' account of the writing of her theosophical books, re-published in *Theosophical History* for October, 1987, offers an interesting example of how selective the distance of time and personal feeling can be in transforming the recollection of events. In her narrative, taken from Sinnett's *Broad Views* for May 1904, she recounts the event that eventually led her to Theosophy — a psychic experience upon seeing Cleopatra's Needle as it was brought to be set up on the Embankment in London; it turned into an Egyptian face, "full of power and will, and intensely alive," then a procession of white-robed priests came to her.

When L.W. Rogers, President of the American Section of the Theosophical Society (Adyar), met Mabel Collins in Glastonshire, England, in Nov. 1920, she promoted much the same story. She was 69 at the time, but she still credited the Egyptian face, and the procession of priests as her inspiration. One day she closed her eyes, and started to write "rapidly, pushing page after page aside as they were finished until finally she dropped the pen and opened her eyes. The

¹Throughout we refer to the author's maiden name used in her books, although at the time she was introduced as Mrs. Cook. Of her husband, Dr. Kenningale Cook (1845-86), little is heard of, other than they were married in 1871, and later separated. His obituary in *Light* (10 July 1886), which deals with his long and painful illness which carried him away at 41, mentions:

He married Mabel, only child of the late Mortimer Collins, and the fine and delicate mediumship of his wife was of the utmost service to him in the early days of his study of Spiritualism. (307)

prologue and first chapter of the *Idyll of the White Lotus* was finished."² The first seven chapters were completed in this manner, but then the priests ceased to appear and the writing stopped.

Judge Khandalavala, a veteran member of the Theosophical Society, follows the Obelisk story and the "strange-looking men coming out from the monument," when he came to write about this episode. "She [Mabel Collins] went into a sort of a trance, but her hand went on working and sheet after sheet was written in a different hand."³ He adds that "a friend of hers introduced her to Colonel Olcott, to whom she told how the *Idyll of the White Lotus* was written but left unfinished. Col. Olcott recommended that, if she had ever thought of making money by publishing the *Idyll*, she should give up such a thought and try again. She did so and the writing of the *Idyll* was completed in the same manner, by automatic writing."⁴

²Rogers, "News From England," *The Messenger* (Chicago) 8/8 (Jan. 1921): 597. After reporting these and other thrilling stories from Mabel, Rogers could only exclaim: "[s]urely the clairvoyant sees some strange and dramatic things."

³N.D. Khandalavala, "Madame Blavatsky As I Knew Her," *The Theosophist* 50/9 (June 1929): 221.

⁴H.P. Blavatsky indicates that it was E.D. Ewen, a Scottish gentleman of psychic temperament, and friend of Olcott's, who pioneered Theosophy in Scotland and the West Indies, who "unearthed" the fragment and brought it to their attention during their 1884 visit to England [Boris de Zirkoff, compiler. *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889*. Volume XI. First edn. (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 326], H.P.B. meeting Mabel Collins "three or four times" in November 1884 enroute to Adyar [*Light on the Path* and *Mabel Collins* (N.Y.: 1889), 5.256.]

These accounts fail to take any notice of the letter from Mabel Collins published in the New York *Path* (September, 1887, 188). She writes from London, 17 July:

I should be very glad if you would allow me to inform your readers that the Preface which I have added to the new edition of *The Gates of Gold* I propose to add also to *The Idyll of the White Lotus* and *Light on the Path*, as soon as there is any opportunity for me to do so.... That book [*The Gates of Gold*] and the *Idyll of the White Lotus* were written in the same manner.

The Preface referred to states:

Once as I sat alone writing, a mysterious Visitor entered my study unannounced and stood beside me.... He spoke from knowledge, and from the fire of his speech I caught faith. I have written down his words; but alas, I cannot hope that the fire shall burn as brightly in my writing as in his speech.

This mysterious visitor, "The True Author," to whom the *Idyll* was dedicated, has been held in Theosophical circles to be the "semi-European Greek brother," Hilarion Smerdis of Cyprus. The annotated title page of Basil Crump's copy of *Light on the Path*, crediting authorship to this adept, supports this idea,⁵ as it would seem the following letter from H.P. Blavatsky to Judge Khandalavala, 12 July 1888, London:

⁵ Facsimile reproduced in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1887*, vol. VIII (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1960), 428, under the entry "Collins, Mabel." Crump says that it was so inscribed by his step-aunt, M.C.

Till the year we came with O. here (1884), she [M.C.] was a woman of the world - never giving a thought to spiritual matters, a fashionable beauty. That year she saw before her, time after time, the astral figure of a dark man (a Greek who belongs to the Brotherhood of our Masters), who urged her to write under his diction. It was Hilarion, whom Olcott knows well. The results were *Light on the Path*, and others. Could she have written this herself? *Never*. To this day she has no idea of philosophy, nor does she like it. She wants simply power, and this cannot get until the *woman is dead in her*.⁶

Confirmation that a change had occurred in the production of her writings comes from Mabel Collins herself. She states that after receiving the first seven chapters of the *Idyll* in 1878, she could not continue it until

in '84-5, in the midst of much trouble and illness, when the wonderful fragment was almost forgotten by me, the work was taken up again by the mysterious power outside myself for whom I was a chosen instrument, and it was finished in the same manner that the first seven chapters were written, without being aware of a single word.⁷

In this later account the "mysterious visitor," from whom she caught the fire of speech, becomes a mysterious "power."

Whatever the source, Mabel Collins literary work during her first seven years of contact with the Theosophists bears a marked difference to her later books. She applied for membership in the

⁶ Theosophical Society Archives, Adyar.

⁷ M.C.s' Narrative," *Theosophical History*, II/4 (Oct. 1987), 122. This statement is backed up in the article by the facsimile of a page of the Ms. for the *Idyll*, Ch. VII, in a handwriting according to Sinnett "utterly unlike her own."

London Lodge 19 April 1884, and later that year the completed *Idyll of the White Lotus* was published by the London company of Reeves and Turner. It was favourably received, the reviewer in the 10 January 1885 issue of *Light* highly recommending this “charmingly written” little work on the trials of initiation in ancient Egypt. *Light on the Path*, a slim blue-grey booklet of 31 pages was out by Oct. 1885, and achieved instant recognition. After her 1887 *Through the Gates of Gold*, regarded by the reviewer in the *Path* for March 1887 as a “commentary on *Light on the Path*” which “will surely rank as one of the standard books on Theosophy,” she broke with the Theosophists, going so far as to take Mme. Blavatsky to court for libel, but dismissing the case when it came to trial in 1890.

Her novel *The Blossom and the Fruit*, out in 1888, had appeared serially in Mme. Blavatsky’s magazine, *Lucifer*, co-edited with Mabel Collins from 1887 to 1888. It is an excellent example of her novelist’s background assimilating theosophical themes to portray the trial of a female aspirant on the Path. While the *Blossom and the Fruit* is a delight, another attempt at storytelling, “The Angel Peacock, which ran through eight issues of the *Theosophist*, from Feb. 1888, was distinctly leaden. Her 1892 attempt to satirize her former theosophical friends in *Morial the Mabatma* fell flat.⁸

In the 1 June 1889 *Religio-Philosophical Journal*, Elliott Coues published an unsigned and undated letter to him from Mabel Collins, 72 Clarendon Road, Notting Hill, admitting that “The

⁸ Like the *Blossom and the Fruit*, *Morial the Mabatma*; or *The Black Master of Tibet*, was also published serially. Twenty chapters appeared in the London weekly *Short Cuts* from 14 Oct. to 30 Dec. 1891. Her anonymous novel, *The Mabatma, A Tale of Modern Theosophy* (London: Downey & Co., 1895), is a reprint of this from the Lovell, Gesterfeld & Company, New York edition of 1892.

writer of the *Gates of Gold* is Mabel Collins, who had it as well as *Light on the Path*, and the *Idyll of the White Lotus* dictated to her by one of the Adepts of the group which through Blavatsky first communicated with the Western World. The name of this inspirer cannot be given, as the personal names of the Masters have already been sufficiently desecrated.” Mabel Collins claimed that this letter was written at Mme. Blavatsky’s dictation, and corrects it by saying that *Light on the Path* “was not to my knowledge inspired by anyone, but that I saw it written on the walls of a place I visit spiritually” [This tallies with her 1887 letter to the *Path* where she says that *Light on the Path* “is a collection of axioms which I found written on the walls of a certain place to which I obtained admittance, and I made notes as I saw them”]. “I have myself never received proof of the existence of any Master though I believe (as always) that the Mahatmic force must exist.”⁹

Yet in a 1922 article in the *London Occult Review* she acknowledges that by the help of a Master, and for an object which will be of service to the world, it is possible for the spirit of a disciple on earth to visit this higher state we call ethereal and enter the Hall of Learning, in full waking consciousness. It was in that way that I obtained the stanzas of *Light on the Path*...The point I want to bring before the attention of my readers is that the stanzas are written on the wall of one of the chapels, that they have always been there and always will be there while the phenomenal world lasts, and evolution continues. The time had come for them to be written down in human language and I was chosen for the task - an honour I had earned in a past incarnation. This is obvious to any student of Karma, for these

⁹ Letter from Mabel Collins to Elliott Coues, 18 April 1889, in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* 46/12, (11 May 1889): 5.

wonderful things do not come by chance.¹⁰

Apparently the “blazing jewels of the words of wisdom” in the Hall of Learning did not shine forth as strongly in her later works. Three slim volumes dealing with the interior life were issued from her pen in the 1890s without much success. Many of her books till her death in 1927 were commentaries on the earlier classics, such as *A Cry From Afar, To the Students on the Path* (London 1905), *As the Flower Grows, Some Visions and Interpretations* (London 1915), *The Story of Sensa, An Interpretation of the Idyll of the White Lotus* (London 1913). The *Idyll* was also adapted as “A Mystery Play in Three Acts,” under the name of *Sensa*, the story’s narrator, with the help of the American actress Maude Hoffman. A London correspondent to the *Adyar Bulletin* of Sept. 1919, thought the music

the best feature of the performance...The theme proved too lofty for its interpreters to do it full justice, the dancers did not appear to understand the inner meaning of this work, and what part of it they did grasp they were unable to express.

Although it is now superseded by *Light on The Path*, Mabel Collins’ first theosophical work, the *Idyll of the White Lotus*, was regarded as a gem of occult learning for most of the nineteenth century, containing as it did the often reprinted “three truths.” George Russell (Æ) in Dublin wrote Carrie Rea in 1886, “Did you read the *Idyll of the White Lotus* yet...? If you have not you missed a great deal, it will bear reading hundreds of times, and each time you will find something new in it.”¹¹ An equally high appraisal came from

¹⁰Collins, “The Astral and Ethereal Worlds. Part II,” *The Occult Review* (London), Oct. 1922: 225.

¹¹George Russell (Æ) to Carrie Rea [1886] in the *Letters from Æ* (London: Abelard-Schuman, 1961), 5. Selected and edited by Alan Denson.

the South Indian scholar, T. Subba Rao, who gave the *Idyll* a long review in the *Theosophist* under his pen name of the “Solar Sphinx.” Personally he informed a correspondent, “I send you a small book by book-post today as a present. It is dictated by an Initiate to an English lady - the daughter of an eminent English poet - in England. It deserves your careful study, and you will no doubt be profited from it.”¹²

The original seven chapters of the *Idyll*, published separately as “A Fragment found in a Pyramid,” offers a chance to examine the effect of the author’s contact with Theosophy on the development of the story. It appears in Volume III of *Cobwebs* (London: Timsley Brothers, 1882), a collection of Mabel Collins’ short stories and novellas, under the title of the *Romance of the White Lotus*. The seven chapters of the *Romance* cover from pages 87 to 165 of that volume, but the seventh chapter here was not the one that was finally used, and has never been reprinted. We can see why. Chapter 7 in the 1884 book version and subsequent reprints introduces a new character into the story, Sensa’s playmate, the little girl who also reappears in an older version in the second part of the novel. It is at this point that the action picks up, and the remaining four chapters which complete the first part of the book form a transition to the second part of the story, “Book II,” where the sequence of chapters begins anew, and which forms the most engaging part of the tale.

Reading the discarded Chapter 7 of the *Romance* offers a useful contrast of methods. If

¹²Subba Rao to V.V. Sivavadhanulu Garu, 1 July 1885, in the *Esoteric Writings of T. Subba Row* (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 567. His 1886 review of the *Idyll* is included in that volume and can be found as a commentary to the Re-Quest edition of the *Idyll* published by the Theosophical Publishing House (Wheaton, 1974).

Mabel Collins had conscious control of being able to enter the Hall of Learning at will, she certainly failed to use it to any great advantage after her years with the Theosophists. Her last work published, *The Locked Room* (1920) reads like the gothic novels that were popular during her own youth; in this tale of the perils and pitfalls of Spiritualism, the fiery speech of her mysterious visitor is equally absent. The chapter where the early version of the *Idyll* breaks off shows a similar withdrawal of inspiration.

Leading up to it, Chapter 6 ends with Sensa being led into the Holy of Holies of the temple by the high priest Agmahd, who then departs. The Lady of the Lotus appears and guards Sensa as he sleeps. Chapter 6 in the early version ends with a slight variation, the main deviation in the text so far:

I lay down at her bidding, and though I knew I rested upon a cold, hard floor, I also felt that my head was pillowed upon an arm so soft and so full of magnetic soothing, that I rested as though upon a couch of angel's plumage. And I fell into the deep, dreamless, undisturbed slumber which gives to infancy its vitality and delight.

.....

Agmahd, upon the step without where he had taken up his watch, felt the silence. No sound was there within the sanctuary. Had the child died that he never moved?

When the dawn penetrated the high windows of the outer temple, he stealthily entered the inner hall where the child was. Carefully he searched for him, and soon found his recumbent form. Placing his hand upon his breast, he discovered that he was wrapped in tranquil sleep. He raised him in his arms and carried him out of the sanctuary, across the corridor, and into the

room where his couch stood. Upon this he laid him, and then passed behind the curtain into his own chamber.

There was writ in Agmahd's secret volume of records but one word that night,— 'Vain'."

[The passage that follows is Chapter VII of *The Romance of the White Lotus*, taken from volume III of M. Collins' *Cobwebs* (1882), 166-71. ed.]

And he was compelled to write that word many times in the pages of his secret book, for the Lily Queen having taken the child-seer under her protection, refused to allow him to be disturbed or used by the other spirits which filled the desecrated sanctuary, and with whom Agmahd desired to communicate. He did not wish to obtain direct speech with the Lily Queen; her presence troubled him, for there was no harmony between them. He knew her, and that light is the messenger of divine love which dwelled within the walls of the temple, and would not desert it utterly, although her partner Wisdom had long spread his broad wings of white and soared away from that home of priestcraft. What Agmahd desired was to obtain direct speech with that spirit of the earth which had so terrified the child-seer, when in the darkness it had made itself visible to him. The spirit of the earth which was known to Agmahd as Selk, or the Mother of the broods of darkness, was the prop of his strength, the supporter of his life. She had won from him the nearest approach to passion, which any being of spirit or of earth had ever succeeded in evoking from his cold and ice-locked breast. His heart was chilled as with the snows of a thousand winters; for he had turned himself wholly from the con-

templation of life without him, and had concentrated his gaze upon his own concerns and his own career. He naturally, in doing this, turned himself from the sunshine of life. And his heart was ice-locked also by the unflinching pressure of Selk's grasp upon it. She held him, body, soul, affections and aspirations, within her unyielding embrace.

And yet these strange beings were unable even to exchange thoughts without the aid of a third person—a seer, such as was this child. Before his time there had been seers in the temple; the priests were taught that through them, they should learn of love and wisdom, of religion and truth. But there are men who, even though they are clothed in the garb of religion, weary of love and wisdom. Agmahd, and others before him and with him, had learned of their own desires, and had been aided in the evil lesson by Selk. Religion, love, and wisdom were alike driven forth from the temple; the holy of holies became a place of which the secrets had need to be hidden in darkness and in silence. The dignity of the temple walls, and the splendour of the priestly rites and ceremonies, covered over and disguised within them the lives and beliefs of men, infamous and evil. The worship of the people was unchanged, for the people are in all ages made to believe that which is shown them. The priestly garments were spotless in their eyes; the temple walls enclosed within them a degree of saintliness which made the common man of clay blush for his sins. Yet though the people lived in this faith, their religious atmosphere was depressed and darkened. They knew not themselves why the teaching of the priest left them with unlifted hearts. They had no eyes with which to penetrate his disguise, and discover the hypocrisy and insincerity which it cloaked.

Into the midst of this strange college was

placed our boy-seer by his trusting mother.

Reared in the country among the flocks, he was innocent as one of the birds of the air. And not only was he innocent as are the ignorant, but he was pure of heart. His mother's influence, and his life among the pure nature of his home, had surrounded him with an untainted atmosphere. Selk found, when she approached him, that the way was closed to her. She could not penetrate the inner circle in which the child's breath was drawn.

But the Lily Queen made him her own; for, like herself, he was a child of nature.

Agmahd held within himself a capacity, which few courtiers possess, for intrigue, and powers of diplomacy which politicians might have envied. He would have chosen, with every responsibility and burden which it entailed, the wearing of a crown. He felt himself a king; and perhaps, with that icy heart and chill self-possession, the priest judged himself rightly in thinking he should have been a ruler of men.

Being a dedicated priest, sworn by every sacred vow to the service of religion, Agmahd found that his nature must, even yet, be gratified. Without mingling in the worldly affairs of nations he could not live. But as he must pass his days within the narrow limits of the temple walls, he was unable to exercise his powers over courts and kings, unless by some abnormal means.

These means, by the aid of Selk, he found.

But at the present time the aid of Selk was withdrawn from him. For months before the child entered the temple there had been no seer; and now the child upon whom his hopes were based forced him to spend vain hours and waste himself in idle anticipations.

Thrice had he invoked Selk's presence. Thrice, with all priestly ceremonies, he had urged her to make herself visible to his seer. This, aided

by the presence of the whole desiring priesthood, she had done. But she had been repelled by the instinctive horror of the child.

He did not feel this to be a disappointment. The child had seen her. But when he endeavoured to summon her again, in the silence of the lonely night, in such manner that their intercourse should be undisturbed, then he found her place taken by the Lily Queen, who banished him from the holy of holies by the written law of the temple, that one mortal only should enter there.

Up and down the long avenue of sphinxes and shrubs, within the shadow, walked Agmahd, pondering. His golden beard fell heavy on his breast. His white robes, with the gold brocade at the hem, gleamed in the light.*

*The papyrus unfortunately ends here.

THE END.

THE SUCCESSION OF H.P. BLAVATSKY: A Documentary History

Henk J. Spierenburg
and Daniël van Egmond

1. The reason for this paper.

Since the death of H.P. Blavatsky on May 8, 1891, the history of the theosophical movement has been dominated by the question to which the title of this paper refers. Only fifteen years ago such a paper would occasion the arousal of fierce emotions. Nowadays, however, most of the existing theosophical organisations seem to be inclined towards some form of cooperation. Hence, within this climate it must be possible to examine the succession of H.P. Blavatsky on the basis of **official documents** and to publish the results in such a way that they can easily be verified.

2. The officers of the T.S.

It is generally known that November 17, 1875 has been given as the date of the foundation of the Theosophical Society. In this paper we shall not deal with the question of the correctness of this date nor with the debate over which persons were really involved. The published *Preamble and By-Laws* of October 30, 1875, which has several times been reprinted in books and articles¹, mentions the names of several officers. This is the first of the official documents we shall

¹E.g. in *The Golden Book of the Theosophical Society: A Brief History of the Society's Growth from 1875-1925*. Edited by C. Jinarājādāsa (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1925), 21-3.

use in this paper. It gives the following names and functions:

OFFICERS AND COUNCIL



President,

HENRY S. OLCOTT.

Vice-Presidents,

S. PANCOAST, M.D., GEORGE HENRY FELT.

Corresponding Secretary,

Mme. H.P. BLAVATSKY.

Recording Secretary,

JOHN STORER COBB

Treasurer,

HENRY J. NEWTON.

Librarian,

CHARLES SOTHERAN

Councillors,

Rev. J.H. WIGGIN,

Mrs. EMMA HARDINGE BRITTEN,

R.B. WESTBROOK,

C.E. SIMMONS, M.D.,

HERBERT D. MONACHESI.

Counsel to the Society,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

In the years before the departure of Olcott and Blavatsky to India, several changes in this list occurred. For instance, in July 1878, W.Q. Judge

²*A Short History of the Theosophical Society*. Compiled by Josephine Ransom (Adyar, Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1938), 108.

became the Recording Secretary of the Society.²

In April 1878, the “Council of the Society” met and provided the President with:

...full discretionary powers to establish Headquarters wherever he chose, to adopt whatever measures he might see fit in the Society’s interest, the Council ratifying in advance whatever he might do.³

This was obviously related to the departure of H.S. Olcott and H.P. Blavatsky to India on December 18, 1878.

After he landed in England, Col. Olcott issued an order about which he wrote the following in his *Old Diary Leaves*:

This arrangement was for the purpose of carrying on the work at the New York Headquarters until the future disposal of the Society should have been decided upon, according to what should happen after we had settled at Bombay.⁴

The text of this order has been published by J. Ransom:⁵

[Foreign Order, No. 1:]

By virtue of the authority vested in me, I hereby designate and assign the following named Fellows of The Theosophical Society to perform the duties of the offices respectively named, with full power.

President, ad interim, Fellow Major-Gen. Abner Doubleday, U.S.A.; Corresponding Secretary, **ad interim**, Fellow David A. Curtis;

³Ibid., 104.

⁴Henry Steel Olcott, *Old Diary Leaves. Volume II (1878-83)* (Adyar, Madras: Theosophist Office, 1900), 4 [first edition]; Adyar 1928, 8.

⁵Ransom, *A Short History*, 124-5.

Treasurer, Fellow George Valentine Maynard; The Recording Secretary, Fellow W.Q.J., will officially notify them of this order, and after consultation with Fellow Doubleday, call an early meeting of the Society’s officers to carry out certain instructions which that gentleman has received, among which are a change of the passwords.

By authority of the .. H.S. Olcott, President
T.S.

It follows that both Olcott and H.P.B. were temporarily replaced; he as the President, and she as the Corresponding Secretary. As far as we know there does not exist an official document which shows that they reassumed their functions after their arrival in India. However Ransom writes:⁶

Next day [March 24, 1879] the Colonel began framing and discussing with others new Rules, and arranging a new Council of the Society, since the rest of the early members were so far away it was impossible to transact business with them.

Furthermore, H.P.B. signed an article in *The Madras Times* for May 28, 1879 with: H.P. Blavatsky, **Corresponding Secretary of the Theosophical Society**.⁷

Finally, on page 1 of the first issue of *The Theosophist*, published in October 1879, “the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society” is mentioned and we may infer from the statements made on this page that it now had its seat at 108 Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, India.

Next followed a period of 8 or 9 years which are not very important in view of the aim

⁶Ibid., 128.

⁷*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1879-1880. Volume II* (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1967), 46.

⁸*The Golden Book*, 253-4.

we are pursuing in this paper. In a published list⁸ we find the names of fourteen persons who were **Vice-President of The Theosophical Society** during this period and the previous years:

S. Pancoast, M.D.
G.H. Felt
Alexander Wilder
J.A. Weisse
Rt. Rev. Sumangala
A.O. Hume, C.B.
H.H. Daji Raja Chandra Singhjee,
Thakore Saheb of Wadhan
Raja Shyama Shankar Roy
Major-General Abner Doubleday
Rao Bahadur Gopalrao Hari
Deshmukh
A.P. Sinnett
Pandit Adityaram Bhattacharya
C.C. Massey
Camille Flammarion
The Hon'ble Alexandre Aksakoff
David E. Dudley, M.D.
Pasquale Menelao
Baron Jules Denis du Petit.

A letter in which H.P.B. advised the former President ad interim, Major-General Abner Doubleday that he was nominated to this office, is dated April 17, 1880.⁹

In December 1888, W.Q. Judge was elected as **Vice-President** during the convention of the Theosophical Society.¹⁰ He filled this office until 1895. H.P.B. was **Corresponding Secretary** until her death in 1891, and H.S.O. remained President until his death in 1907.

3. The officers of the E.S. 3.1. H.P. Blavatsky

In the October 1888 issue of *Lucifer* the following official document was published:

Official Notice

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric Students, to be organized on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the **real** founders of the T.S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founder:-

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organized a body, to be known as the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society".

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H.P. Blavatsky, as its Head; she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with:- Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(Signed) H.S. OLCOTT,
President in Council.

⁹"Leaves of Theosophical History," *The Theosophical Forum* (Point Loma), XV (Nov. 1939), 368.

¹⁰J. Ransom, *A Short History*, 252-3.

¹¹*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1888-1889*. Volume X (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1964), 154-5.

Attest:- H.P. BLAVATSKY.¹¹

It is not necessary to say anything more about H.P.B.'s status within the "Esoteric Section".

3.2. H.S. Olcott

The following quotations clearly show that H.P.B. considered H.S.O. to be the right authority able to found the Esoteric Section:

The only Esoteric Society which has any LEGAL right to the name "Theosophical" is that which Col. Olcott founded and chartered in October, 1888, for the proof of which see *Lucifer* of that month¹²

"The Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society" was formed under the orders of the President-Founder, in October, 1888, in London...¹³

Several other quotations could be given, yet we shall only add one more because it shows a different aspect of Olcott's authority:¹⁴

...the term "Esoteric" and "Esotericism" having been so desecrated... [that] our Esoteric Section had better drop its name. The Council in England has decided to call it "Arcane" instead of the "Esoteric" Section...

Hoping this name will be sanctioned by our President, Col. H.S. Olcott...

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY.

Head of the Arcane (late Esoteric) Section of the T.S. Fontainebleau, July 7th, 1889.

Despite the fact that the Mahatma K.H.

made in a letter to H.S.O. the following statement:

H.P.B. has next to no concern with administrative details, and should be kept clear of them, so far as her strong nature can be controlled. **But this you must tell to all: With occult matters she has everything to do.** We have **not** abandoned her; she is **not** "given over to chelas". She is **our direct agent**.¹⁵

which determined the distinction between the functions of H.P.B. and H.S.O., H.P.B. still appointed him as an officer of the E.S.:¹⁶

Theosophical Society, Esoteric Section
London, 25th December, 1889.

I hereby appoint Colonel H.S. Olcott my confidential agent and sole official representative of the Esoteric Section for the Asiatic Countries.

All correspondence relative to admission into, and resignation from, the Section shall be referred to him, and all **Instructions** transmitted by him, and his decision is to be taken and accepted as given by myself. Such correspondence to be invariably marked "Private" on the envelope.

(Signed) H.P. BLAVATSKY.

A possible solution to this apparent contradiction may be found in an article written by

¹²*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889*. Volume XI (Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1973), 295.

¹³*Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 342.

¹⁵*Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom 1870-1900, First Series*. Transcribed and compiled by C. Jinarājadāsa (Adyar, Madras: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1919) [fifth edition, 1964], 46.

¹⁶*Lucifer* (January 1890): 437; *The Theosophist* (March 1890, suppl.): cv; *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1889-1890*. Volume XII (Wheaton, Ill: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1980), 89, 484.

¹⁷*Collected Writings*, vol. XI, 382.

two **Manas(es)** the American thought & the Indian - or rather the trans-Himalayan Esoteric Knowledge.

Dixi

H.P.B. . .

P.S.

W.Q.J. had better show, & **impress this** on the mind **of all those whom it may concern.**

3.4. Annie Besant

Annie Besant was not one of the founders of The Theosophical Society, yet in letter Nr. 33 to A.P. Sinnett, the Mahatma K.H. wrote:²¹

Meanwhile use every effort to develop such relations with A. Besant that your work may run on parallel lines and in full sympathy...

The date of this letter is unknown; yet it obviously is an early letter because the last letters by M. and K.H. published in the book with letters to A.P. Sinnett, were written in 1885, as is shown by both the chronology of Margaret Conger and Mary K. Neff. Linton and Hanson have argued that it was written in 1884.²²

That such an early date is probable follows among other things from the fact that the *Collected Writings* of H.P.B. contain some early references to Annie Besant. These references are always

²¹*The Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.* Transcribed, compiled, and with an Introduction by A.T. Barker. First edn. (N.Y.: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1924), 244-5; third edn. edited by Christmas Humphreys and Elsie Benjamin (Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1962), 241.

²²George E. Linton & Virginia Hanson, *Readers Guide to the Mahatma Letters to A.P. Sinnett* (Wheaton, London, Madras 1972), 214.

²³*H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings: 1882-1883*. Volume IV (Wheaton, Ill.: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1969), 124.

kind, even if H.P.B. absolutely disagreed with some of A.B.'s opinions. Indeed, in June 1882 H.P.B. even made the following remarks:²³

Another lady orator, of deservedly great fame, both for eloquence and learning - the good Mrs. Annie Besant - without believing in controlling spirits, or, for that matter, in her own spirit, yet speaks and writes such sensible and wise things, that we might almost say that one of her speeches or chapters contains more matter to benefit humanity, than would equip a modern trance-speaker for an entire oratorical career.

On August 20, 1890, the **Inner Group of the Esoteric Section** met for the first time.²⁴ Present were: H.P. Blavatsky, Annie Besant, George R.S. Mead, Constance Wachtmeister and Claude Falls Wright. About the meaning of this **Inner Group**, it was recorded that:

H.P.B. said that the Inner Group was the Manas of the T.S. The E.S. was the Lower Manas; the T.S. the Quaternary.²⁵

On April 1, 1890, H.P.B. appointed A.B. as the most important member of the Inner Group:²⁶

[SEAL]

E.S. Order

I hereby appoint in the name of the MASTER, Annie Besant Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section & Recorder of the Teachings.

H.P.B. . .

²⁴H.J. Spierenburg, *The Inner Group Teachings of H.P. Blavatsky*, San Diego: Point Loma Publications, Inc., 1985), 1.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 27.

²⁶*Ibid.*, x-xi, with facsimile copied from *The Theosophist* (June 1932): 230-1; *Collected Writings*, vol. XII, 485.

To Annie Besant, C.S. of the I.G. of the E.S.
& R. of the T.

April 1, 1891.

Read and Recorded April 11/91. William
Q. Judge, Sec. U.S.

This appointment ensued after H.P.B. had written a letter to W.Q. Judge on March 27, 1891. Due to the fact that this letter was added to the official record of the meeting of the Council of the E.S. after the death of H.P.B., it became recognized as an official document. H.P.B. wrote:²⁷

UNSELFISHNESS AND ALTRUISM is Annie Besant's name, but with me and for me she is Heliodore, a name given to her by a Master, and that I use with her, it has a **deep Meaning**. It is only a few months she studies occultism with me in the **innermost** group of the E.S., and yet she has passed far beyond all others. She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least - all intellect, and yet she hears Master's voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognizes his voice from that of D—. Judge, **she is a most wonderful woman**, my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America.

3.5. A. Besant and W. Q. Judge

H.P.B. died on May 8, 1891. On May 27, the Inner Group of the *Eastern School of Theosophy* [the Esoteric Section] convened to discuss the succession of H.P.B. in the E.S.; W.Q. Judge was also present. The minutes of this meeting have been published a number of times, but only in

²⁷*Theosophy* [Journal of the U.L.T.] (February, 1929): 151; *The O..E. Library Critic* (August-September 1935).

²⁸Dara Eklund, *Echoes of the Orient*, vol. III, San Diego 1987, 350-3.

fragmentary form. However, in 1987 a complete version appeared in a readily available book:²⁸

Eastern School of Theosophy

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE E.S.T.

A full meeting of the Council, as appointed by H.P.B., was held at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society in Europe, 19, Avenue Road, London, England, on May 27, 1891. The American Councillors were represented by Brother William Q. Judge, with full power, and Brother Judge attended as the representative of H.P.B. under a general power given as below:

[follows the document as given under 3.3., dated December 14, 1888]

The Council passed the following minute: In virtue of our appointment by H.P.B., we declare:

That in full accord with the known wishes of H.P.B., the visible Head of the School, we primarily resolve and declare that the work of the School ought and shall be continued and carried on along the lines laid down by her, and with the matter left in writing or dictated by her before her departure.

That it was recorded that there was ample proof by witnesses, members of this School, that her last words in reference to the School and its work were: "KEEP THE LINK UNBROKEN! DO NOT LET MY LAST INCARNATION BE A FAILURE."

That her words to Brother Judge in a recent letter were read stating that this Section (now School) is the "throbbing heart of the Theosophical Society".

That it was resolved and recorded that the highest officials in the School for the present are Annie Besant and William Q. Judge, in accordance with the above-quoted order to

[follow the documents as printed under 3.3., dated December 14, 1888 and October 23, 1889]

Subsequently H.P.B. changed the "Section" to the "School" and declared it not a part of the T.S. Organization. She made the then Inner Group the Council, and shortly before her departure made Annie Besant its chief officer, as Chief Secretary of the I.G. and Recorder of the Teachings, by the following:

[follow the document as printed under 3.4., dated April 1, 1890]

Thus it was when she departed.

Out of these two appointments was constituted... the Dual Headship in 1891 for the management of the School, an arrangement that has not on the whole at any time worked well in practice. At the present time the only way to preserve the E.S.T. unbroken and give time for the restoration of the mutual trust referred to and smooth out friction is returning to the above arrangements. We remain throughout the world the one School - "the throbbing heart of the T.S." - founded by H.P.B., recognized her as our Teacher and the Masters as our foundation, having in common her Headship, the Instructions she left, and the Rules of the School. The E.S.T. thus will remain the heart of the T.S., energizing the movement, all its parts working together as belonging to one whole, but administration proceeding as during her stay with us, under those appointed by her as her chief agents in the way stated...

The Rules remain the same save as to verbal alterations, and will remain the same for the whole School: any further additions thereto or amendments under the provision therefor which time may disclose as needful will be made by said two chief officers by mutual agreement.

ANNIE BESANT WILLIAM Q. JUDGE.

It is not necessary to add anything more. According to this document both "successors" of H.P.B. could not possibly "dismiss" each other. Obviously, their "solution" did not concern the organization of the T.S. and its later fragmentations, nor the presidency of the T.S., since this arrangement was only meant for the E.S.

Alexandra David-Neel's Early Acquaintances With Theosophy Paris 1892

By Daniel Caracostea

Translated by Diana Chapotin-Dunningham

[This article was originally published in the December 1986 issue of *Le Lotus Bleu* (402-10) as "Sejour d'Alexandra David-Neel Paris 1892."]

Some years ago in Theosophical Society archives in Paris we found a letter dated 10 December 1892 from Alexandra David-Neel to G.R.S. Mead,¹ General Secretary of the European Section² which was based in London. This letter is of quite some historical interest because it belongs to a period of A.D-N.'s life lacking in clarity, both as we know it through her memoirs, *Le Sortilège du Mystère*,³ and through her biographies such as Jean Chalon's *Le Lumineux Destin d'Alexandra David-Neel*.⁴

Although this letter deals mainly with a dispute between two T.S. [Theosophical Society] members and might seem therefore of relatively

minor interest to readers, it is published here in full because it reveals a difference in attitude between A.D-N. at that time and A.D-N. as we know her in *Le Sortilège du Mystère*. These memoirs were written many years after the events in question; in them the author speaks sarcastically about things in which she had in fact been far from uninvolved at the time.

On pages 73-75 of the above work A.D-N. gives an account of a purportedly ludicrous conversation she held with M. Coulomb⁵ about humanity's lunar ancestors. It is difficult to imagine Coulomb capable of the inanities she credits him with, in the light of the articles he wrote in theosophical magazines of the time, or that A.D-N. had never heard of this doctrine while staying with Theosophists in London prior to her arrival in Paris. The doctrine is explained by Madame [H.P.] Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*.

¹ G.R.S. Mead (1863-1933) had a university education in classics, Latin and Greek, and joined the T.S. in 1884. He met H.P. Blavatsky for the first time in 1887 and became her private secretary in 1889. After H.P.B.'s death he co-edited the magazine *Lucifer* with Annie Besant. Together they published H.P.B.'s posthumous writings and revised certain works such as *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Key to Theosophy*. He wrote numerous works on Gnosticism and the Gnostics.

² During that era there were only a few national sections: The American Section founded in 1886; Great Britain founded in 1888; and then from 9 July 1890 the European Section headquartered in London, with H.P.B. as head and G.R.S. Mead as General Secretary; finally India in 1891. For the record, the French Section was formed in 1899.

³ Published in 1973 by Plon, 63-84.

⁴ Published in 1985 in Paris by Librairie Académique Perrin.

⁵ A native of Nates, E.J. Coulomb was a friend of F.K. Gaboriau, who founded the theosophical magazine *Le Lotus* and edited it from March 1887 to March 1889. It is likely that Coulomb came to know Theosophy through his friend. He lived for part of 1887-88 in London with H.P.B. and contributed articles or translations to a variety of French theosophical magazines. He took the pen name of Amaravella. We lose track of him in June 1894. Nevertheless, another book by him, *Le Secret de l'Univers, selon le Brahmanisme Esotérique*, was published in 1900 by Editions de l'Initiation, 3 rue de Savoie, Paris; and an article bearing the same title was published in October 1897 in *L'Initiation*, the magazine edited by Papus. E.J. Coulomb is not to be confused with his namesake, Alexis Coulomb, who became notorious through the scandal which took place at Adyar in 1884.

In 1892 the T.S. in France was represented by Ananta Lodge, opened in January and chartered in February. It replaced Lotus Lodge and had Arthur Arnould as President and E.J. Coulomb as Secretary. Both were members of the Esoteric School which they had joined while H.P.B. was alive and who greatly respected them both. With H.P.B.'s financial and moral support Arnould had founded the *Lotus Bleu* magazine in March 1890 but was later forced by his health to withdraw from active work which Coulomb continued as secretary.

It was apparently at the latter's instigation that the office of the French branch of the European Section was transferred from 14 rue Chaptal to 30 boulevard St. Michel. In Coulomb's view this new center should resemble 19 Avenue Road, London, where the movement's workers led to a great extent a community life. He envisaged a center from which Theosophy in France would radiate out. The move to the new Paris center took place on 1 October 1892 and its inauguration on 27 October with Mr. Mead present. It was an apartment with seven windows overlooking the boulevard and contained a very large room serving as office, library and meeting room, and a dining room as well as accommodations for boarders.⁶ We know from Coulomb that among the activities taking place at the center, classes in Sanskrit⁷, Hebrew, English and German were given. In an unpublished letter in English of 30 October 1891 to Mead, Coulomb writes:

An idea has come to me. There are several fellows, including G(aboriau), who wish to learn Sanskrit. So I mean to go to Burnouf, who is interested to the solar-myth aspect of Theosophy, and ask him to start a class of

⁶ *Le Lotus Bleu*, 4/5 (5 July 1893): 131.

⁷ *Le Lotus Bleu*, 3/8 (8 October 1892): 254.

Sanskrit for theosophists at a cheap price.

It appears that these classes did in fact take place but not under Burnouf. It is not known how long the community experience at the Paris center at 30 Bd St. Michel lasted but most likely not beyond the end of 1893 or beginning of 1894.

In the archives there are 2 letters from Madame Kolly,⁸ mentioning the visit of Miss David, then aged 24, to the center. The first, dated Thursday 24 November 1892, is addressed to Mr. Mead:

I'm going to write and invite Miss David to come; she'll be able to do what I have been doing, only better, since she's more capable at everything; the difficulty is that she has no steady income and wants to travel.

The second is addressed to Mrs. Cremer, dated Monday, 28 November 1892:

Miss David has been with us since Friday evening but is only here on a visit at the invitation of a theater director, so she won't be living at the center this winter....

Finally, we learn in a letter from Annie Besant to A.D-N., dated 17 March 1893, that she had asked for admission to the Esoteric Section. However, according to information obtained at Adyar in December 1986, it seems that A.D-N. did

⁸ Louise Kolly was a T.S. member resident in Russia who came to live at the center at the invitation of Mr. Coulomb. She became lodge librarian in 1895 and secretary of the Paris Lodge Ananta on 27 December 1895 after the death of M. Arnould.

not join this section.⁹

We know nothing of the length of A.D-N.'s stay at the center and even less of her departure.

Daniel Caracostea

30 Blvd. St. Michel
Paris, Dec. 10, 1892

Dear Mr. Mead,

Thank you for your kind letter of last month and the friendly concern which prompted you to put me in touch with Mrs. Windhurst. I have no doubt that this new relationship will be indeed very fruitful. I have been so busy with all manner of activities that I haven't had a moment to write to Amsterdam. On Mon-

⁹ English version of the letter now held at the A.D-N. Foundation in Digne.

London, 17 March 1893

My Dear Mademoiselle,

I am not able to give advice on the best way to present Theosophy. This is a question which demands an essay, not a letter. The spiritual nature of man, reincarnation, karma, are three of the easiest subjects to share. To go into them deeply is difficult, but it is easy to understand the basic principles. You will find in my little book on reincarnation, popular arguments which you can use. The best hours for meditation are before sunrise and at sunset. Meditation is the basis for spiritual progress. But I can only give you really helpful advice on this subject after you are admitted to the School. Six months after your entry, you will receive detailed instruction. It is not worth giving you platitudes now which you can find in books, since you have requested admission to the School. I have sent M. Coulomb the preliminary papers.

Fraternally yours

Annie Besant

day I intend to repair this omission. As you can see by this letter, I am presently at the Paris center. You know that I have had to break with my family because of my refusal to renounce membership of the T.S.¹⁰ I have therefore decided to try to establish myself in Paris, which will enable me to swell the numbers of those who are deeply involved in the work of the Paris center.

You who have always treated me as an incorrigible sceptic can hardly suspect me of intemperate enthusiasm if I tell you that never in my life have I encountered what I find here. I would like all those who, with me, have wondered if there is anything but selfishness at the bottom of men's hearts to be able to spend just one week with our brother Mr. Coulomb.¹¹ I have never seen such impersonality, such complete selflessness. Ten theosophists of his kind would be more than enough to cause Theosophy to catch on. Through conversations I have had with members of Ananta Lodge, I know that everyone considers Mr. Coulomb, as I do, to be the heart and soul of this little band of French theosophists. If some misfortune should snatch him from the fellowship of T.S. members, I believe it would be a rude shock to the movement.¹² ...As for the management of the center, he is admirably supported by Mrs. Coulomb.

You met her at the center opening but you can't have come to know and appreciate her well in such a short time. She is just the right person for a center. She is very uncomplicated, gentle and dedicated. The most she can be reproached for is her shyness; she is always afraid of bothering others and remains in another room on the grounds that the baby

¹⁰ A.D-N.'s T.S. membership diploma is held at the A.D-N. Foundation in Digne. It is dated 7 June 1892 and was presented in London and not in Adyar as Jean Chalon writes in *Le Lumineux Destin d'Alexandra David-Neel*, 82.

¹¹ Called Edmond Jourdan in *Le Sortilège de Mystère*.

¹² Compare this passage with what A.D-N. says in her memoirs.

mustn't come into the office. The woman scarcely resembles the confident traveller [A.D-N.] you went to fetch one evening at Victoria Station! At any rate it is very fortunate for the T.S. that one like her exists, if only to establish the Paris center which couldn't function without her quiet dedication.¹³

Dear Mr. Mead, I won't hide from you my amazement at seeing an attempt to create disharmony in this miniature paradise. At first, quarreling revolving around food (questions of pasta, pulses, etc., - I'll spare you the details) made me laugh. But things became nasty and I must say that Mr. Coulomb demonstrated exceptional patience. On her return from London, Mme. Kolly demanded that meals be served in her room, that her fire be tended all day, etc. These were done. She requested books and these were brought to her. As she expressed a wish for publicity leaflets Mr. Coulomb sent her a plentiful supply. She had asked if she could purchase *Le Secret de l'Absolu*.¹⁴ Mr. Coulomb made a gift of 2 copies to her and the same evening asked me again if I didn't think Mme. Kolly would be open to a reconciliation. I could see quite clearly how inclined toward it he was himself. I suggested as much to Mme. Kolly, in fact I did and said all that came to me in my love of harmony but it was a complete waste, alas! I found in Mme. Kolly only a fierce ill-will toward Mr. Coulomb. She didn't attempt

to hide it moreover, promising herself to do all she could to harm him, and she made it quite clear to me that her goal was to get the running of the French center into other hands. This wish is clear enough in itself but the spiteful way in which it was expressed made me shiver. In truth if I hadn't had other experience to the contrary or felt within myself that Theosophy was capable of producing good results, I would be wondering if this is what we come to after a long time in T.S. circles — I wouldn't have written to you about this, I am too much of a newcomer amongst you to have the right to involve myself in your private affairs, but I witnessed such a scene this morning that I am unable to remain silent any longer. Mme. Kolly was moving out and since she was taking with her books belonging to Mr. Coulomb and the key to the apartment, I took it upon myself to request that she return them. I believe I wrote as politely as possible; in any case when Mme. Kolly received the note I sent to her new lodgings¹⁵ with one of the moving men, she came rushing back into the office, and began insulting Mr. Coulomb who was reading and said nothing. Twice she returned, saying she was going to the police commissioner's, that she was looking for the concierge, that she would make the affair public, etc. She ended up calling Mr. Coulomb a thief and other similar names. You probably know that when she moved in she gave 500 francs to the French center. When she came to leave, she asked for her money back and it was returned immediately. What's more she was never asked for the cost of her room and board since her return from London. If I'm writing all this to you it's not a result of taking sides; I am not personally involved. I am merely considering the T.S.'s interests and the unfortunate influ-

¹³ See the description of Mme. Coulomb-Jourdan given by A.D-N. (79-80): "The little woman was the most deliciously foolish creature imaginable...."

¹⁴ *Le Secret de l'Absolu* by E.J. Coulomb, published in 1892 and with a preface by the famous Sanskrit scholar M.E. Burnouf. This work appeared in the collection published by Coulomb: Bibliothèque de la Renaissance Orientale (Library of the Eastern Renaissance) at T.S. Headquarters, 30 Bd St Michel. The two other works appearing in this collection were *The Voice of the Silence* by H.P. Blavatsky, translated by Amaravella (Coulomb), and *An Epitome of Theosophy* by W.Q. Judge (*le Lotus Bleu*, 3/8: 254).

¹⁵ 45 boulevard St. Michel (unpublished letter from Mme. Kolly to Mrs. Cremer, 28 November 1892).

ence on new members all this negative emotion and nastiness could have, coming from someone who certainly doesn't realize the harm her rancour is capable of causing. I do believe that in this respect Mme. Kolly has shown herself in her true light. She has argued with all the workmen she has engaged and even this morning her movers in exasperation became angry with her. She can be forgiven when all is said and done, what's more where real theosophists are concerned everything is forgivable, but it's important in this case to try to contain the damage and stop it spreading further. Oh well, we must never give up; if Mme. Kolly chooses to invite me to visit her, I will do all in my power to quieten her spirits and to dispel the misunderstandings and irritations at the root of all this mischief.—The T.S. needs perfect harmony to have a hope of winning adherents amongst the French public. There are already enough financial problems arising for the creation of a center. I am addressing you as I would a brother and I count on your discretion. You cannot imagine the heroism and self-sacrifice shown by Mr. Coulomb and his wife. With his talent, Mr. Coulomb could easily have established a fine position for himself as an artist whereas at the moment he's living in penury. If the fact that I have left behind the comfort of my former life and am trusting myself to fate rather than leave the T.S. entitles me to speak familiarly to you, then I say that Mr. Coulomb's allowance seems utterly insufficient to live on. I don't quite know how I can have the audacity to address you like this but I hope you will keep it secret. I don't believe Mr. Coulomb would ever forgive me for interfering in his business. If I am acting childishly, forgive me, I don't believe I am behaving wrongly but am pushed by the ardent wish to see the T.S. win a wide following in France where Eastern philosophy, too little known, could do immense

good. Once again I beg your absolute silence about this letter; if you have any advice to offer about appropriate conduct in this situation, you may write to me in Paris. Farewell, dear Mr. Mead, remember me to those of your friends whom I met this summer and know that I am your sincere, devoted,

Alexandra David¹⁶

¹⁶ Her marriage to M. Neel took place in 1904.

SOME EXPERIENCES IN INDIA

W.T. BROWN, B.L., F.T.S.

The following Narrative by Mr. W. T. Brown, a Member of the London Lodge of the Theosophical Society, who has recently gone out in India, is published as a contribution to the literature of a subject which has lately excited a good deal of interest in this country.

I am about to attempt the writing of a narrative, which I trust may prove interesting and encouraging, especially to my fellow students in the Theosophical Society.

The members of the London Society, with which I have the honour to be connected, are perhaps aware of the immediate circumstances which led to my coming out to India; but for the interest of the general reader I shall endeavour to give a short sketch of preceding events by way of introduction.

After a long course of study, pursued in Strassburg, in Zurich, and in Edinburgh, I graduated in the University of Glasgow in April, 1882, and then resolved to take a lengthy holiday, and visit the United States and Canada, which I did in the summer of that year. On my return I took a hurried trip to Switzerland to visit the family of a gentleman who had recently died, and returned to Scotland about the end of August. The result of my long travelling was that I was completely knocked up, my vitality being at a very low ebb. After being treated by an allopathic doctor, who, I venture to say, did me a great amount of harm, I travelled still more, and finally came to London

in April 1883. Here I resided with Dr. Nichols, the eminent homeopathist, in South Kensington, and, under the benign influence of the "natural and sympathetic treatment," I recovered my pristine vigour, and was quite restored to health.

There were several visitors besides myself in the house of Dr. N., and among them Madame G., F.T.S. of Germany. Madame G. had been a pupil of the late Abbé Louis Constant (better known as Eliphas Levi), and had come to England to be initiated into the Theosophical Society by Mr. Sinnett, who had just arrived from India. I soon became deeply interested in occult literature, was made acquainted with Mr. Sinnett, with whom I had long conversations, and was admitted a member of the Theosophical Society.

I need not expatiate upon the effect which the reading of Mr. Sinnett's book, "The Occult World," had had upon me, how I felt intuitively that the work contained more absolute truth than was usually perceivable, and how I was moved by the teachings of Mahatma Koot Hoomi.¹ Suffice it to say, gradually I had become imbued with a desire to come to India, to partake to some extent in the labours of the Theosophical Society, and thus to come nearer, if possible, to the great teachers of the East.

¹A Mahatma, or "Great Soul," is one who, by walking along the Path of Righteousness and Truth, has purified or spiritualised his nature. He has brought himself into relationship with laws which, to natures unprepared, belong to the "unknowable." There is essentially *nothing supernatural* in the "science of the Divine," and the higher laws are those which operate in the spiritual region of sublimated matter.

Accordingly, after due consideration, I wrote to Mr. Sinnett, a letter from which the following is an extract:-"You will be aware by this time that I take a deep interest in Theosophy, and am inwardly convinced of the grand realities to be discovered within its pale. Well, it so happens that I am unusually fortunately situated for pursuing a career in Occultism, and, after much careful consideration, I have resolved to offer myself in the Search for Truth. Belonging, as I do, to a good Scotch family, I have had ample opportunity of realising the value of true religion, but all along, and especially in later years, I have been convinced that in Protestantism, Catholicism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, and all the other "Isms," of which we hear so much, only partial truth is to be found. It has always been a puzzling matter to me to define how it was that among Christians there should be so many divisions and strifes, and it has been only since becoming a Fellow of the Theosophical Society that I have been satisfied that it is owing to the dearth of Esoteric doctrine. Now, I am aware that the step which I am about to take is a most important one, and one in which the responsibility must rest upon myself alone; but, after viewing the matter from all points, I have come to the conclusion that in Theosophy there is a wide sphere of labour and usefulness, and that a young man could not devote himself to nobler work than to learning and teaching its transcendent truths. It is my desire, then, my dear Sir, to go to the head centre of Theosophy and Rosicrucianism-viz., to India."

Having received in answer very kind letters from Mr. Sinnett, and from others to whom I had written upon the subject, I prepared for my departure, and finally sailed for India upon the 25th of August.

Before transferring our narrative from Europe to the East, it may not be out of place to

simply refer to a correspondence, which had taken place in the spiritualistic paper "Light," on the subject of "Esoteric Buddhism." I just mentioned the matter here in order to connect it with a memorandum which I had the honour to receive from Mahatma Koot Hoomi shortly after my arrival in Madras.

It was at Colombo in the Island of Ceylon that I first had the pleasure of seeing some brother Theosophists of a different race, creed, and complexion. The kindness of the Singhalese Theosophists to an Englishman, who was, in every sense but one, a stranger, was sufficient evidence of the unity of sentiment which prevails among the brotherhood, in at least two widely separated parts of the globe. At Colombo I made the acquaintance of the Rev. H. Sumangala, F.T.S., the learned scholar and high Priest.

At length I reached the Head Quarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, and was welcomed by Madame Blavatsky,² the learned Author, Editor, and Corresponding Secretary. I was established in a bungalow, situated beautifully by the river side, and felt at home in a very short time.

In regard to Madame Blavatsky, I need not say more than this, that never before have I met anyone who evinces such vast and varied learning, nor one who is more large hearted.

²Madame Blavatsky, we may here remark, is the widow of General N.V. Blavatsky. Governor, for many years, of Erivan. She is the eldest daughter of the late Colonel Hahn of the Russian Horse Artillery and niece of General Fadeef. She is connected with some of the most noble families in Russia and is "Son Excellence Madame la Generale Helene P. Blavatsky." Her broad humanitarian views induced her to drop all distinctions and become a citizen of the United States when the Theosophical Society held its first meetings in New York. Colonel Olcott, we may add, has a wide and national reputation, gained during the late Civil War, for services to his country as an Officer of the War Department.

The surroundings at the head quarters are as genial as one could well conceive, and the editorial staff (including as it does some Chelas³ of the Himalayan masters) is of a most spiritual and intellectual order.

At this point I may endeavour to show why I mentioned the correspondence, which is before referred to as having taken place in "Light." One evening, shortly after my arrival at Adyar, some letters were being sent by Chelas to their masters, and I was permitted to enter the "Occult Room" and see the process going on. The letters were put into an almirah, in a richly ornamented recess called by some "the Shrine." There were some seven of us then present, four of whom were Chelas. These gentlemen, after placing their letters as aforesaid, offered up incense and prostrated themselves according to the Hindu manner of evincing devotion and respect. In about two minutes Madame, who was standing by my side in an attractive attitude, received a psychic telegram, and indicated that the answers had come to hand. The almirah was accordingly opened, and in place of the letters "posted," others were there, enclosed in Tibetan envelopes and written on Tibetan paper. D.K.M. (a Chela of the master Koot Hoomi) discovered something more than was expected, and exclaimed, "Here is a letter from my master for Mr. Brown!" I then received from his hands a memorandum, written with blue pencil, and in the following terms:-"Why feel uneasy? Perchance we may yet become friends: I have to thank you for your defence of Esot. Bud, K.H., W.T. Brown, B.L., F.T.S."

I need scarcely say how honoured and grateful I felt at being noticed by the Mahatma, whose teachings had so strongly impressed me in the metropolis of England. I rose, and going

forward, reverently said, "Mahatma Koot Hoomi! I sincerely thank you." Immediately all those present in the room said, "There's a bell-did you hear it?" I said that I had *not*, but, perceiving the earnestness displayed on all the faces, added that I *believed* it had been rung. Madame B. then expressed regret that I had not observed the Master's acknowledgement of having heard my words, and said "Oh Master! let us hear the bell once more, if it be possible." We stood silently for about a minute and then there was distinctly heard by all of us (myself included) the sound of a bell. I may add also that, along with the letters received, there was a sprig, which had been freshly plucked and which I kept as a memento until it faded utterly away.

Colonel Olcott, the President of the Theosophical Society, had before my arrival, started on a tour through Central India and the North West Provinces, and it was soon arranged that I might take advantage of the opportunity and join him in his travels. Before leaving Madras, however, I received from Colonel Olcott the letter, of which the following is an extract-a letter which I make bold to say speaks strongly for the kind consideration and manly honesty of this great and genuine man:-

"And now, before finally taking up the Society's work with me, you must be told just what to expect, so that there shall be no disappointment, nor room for future complaints.

"Firstly, then, the situation here in India is as regards relations of the paramount and subject races, strained and painful to a degree. In short they mutually hate each other. Until this Theosophical movement began, no philanthropist had found a common ground upon which they could unite, nor any upon which the several castes and sects of Asiatics could stand. But there are ample proofs now that in our Society this potential union

³Disciples.

may be found. Until an act known as the 'Ilbert Bill' was introduced in Council, things were getting on nicely and a cordial spirit was gradually springing up. The Bill in itself was not so important; it simply gave effect, to a very limited degree, to promises often held out to the 'natives' of possible careers in the Civil Service. Events now prove that it was an untimely measure. An explosion of wrath and hatred occurred among the Anglo-Indians and every expression of scorn and contempt was used towards the 'natives.' This of course provoked reprisals in kind, an agitation spread throughout the Peninsula, and a chasm opened between the two races.

"Our Society is so far outside the political hurly-burly that the only effect has been to check the drift of Anglo-Indian kindness towards Theosophy. We are devoted to the revival of the old Aryan wisdom, and therefore have to partake of the moment's hatred of everything Indian. Of course the affection and respect for us is correspondingly growing among the 'natives.' As American Citizens, Madame B. and I have no difficulty to keep ourselves free from the passions and prejudices that rage about us, and I go about the country as unmoved by the things that are goading the Europeans as though they did not exist. But can you do the same? Do you feel in your heart that the missionary work of Theosophy is thoroughly attractive? Are you prepared to eat with me the plainest food - to expect neither luxury nor even comfort - to have your private character traduced, your motives pictured as base and sordid, to endure extremes of climate, the fatigue of hard journeys in all sorts of conveyances by land and sea, to know of the existence of the *Masters* yet be denied the privilege to go to them, until by years of toil you have purged your innermost nature of its selfishness and accumulated moral filth, and by working unselfishly for

the enlightenment of mankind you shall have fitted yourself for the holy companionship? Think of all this. You have not begun the career as yet. Ponder the situation. If your caste or the world attract you, go to them and be happy. The philanthropist's lot is a hard one; few covet its crown of thorns, fewer still are able to wear it. You are young, life is before you, choose thoughtfully."

"Next, as to serving with me. With me there is your widest and surest field of usefulness, and doubtless the *Masters* will tell you, as they did me years ago, that you must seek them through the Theosophical Society. Should you come to me it must be in the spirit of one who is teachable, earnest and unprejudiced. If you are likely to dislike me because I am American and have my national traits and ways, if you are likely to take offence at brusqueness, perhaps even imperiousness (for in my absorbing devotion to my work I am sometimes stern and dogmatic, neither sparing myself nor seeing individuals apart from their place in the carrying on of this Herculean work), if you are liable to soon tire of my constant movement and sigh for rest and inertia at home, then do *not* come. For I tell you I am so dead in earnest that I would be ready to die any day for my society, and there is no room for any one in my department who is half-hearted.

"But if all these warnings do not repel you, and you have decided to sacrifice yourself, your strength, your talents for our cause, then come and I shall treat you as a son or a younger brother, as the difference in our ages may call for."

After careful perusal of Colonel Olcott's letter and reading between the lines, another indication merely of the "realities" with which in Theosophy an aspirant is presented, I telegraphed in answer the simple words "I come." I then received a cheering message from Colonel Olcott,

and prepared to join him on his northward journey.

After a railway journey of six and twenty hours, I joined Colonel Olcott at the town of Sholapur, which place will always be imprinted on my memory as that at which I had the honour first to meet our worthy President.

With the details of our journey my Indian Brothers are familiar, but, in the hope that it may prove interesting to the Theosophists of America and Europe, I shall endeavour to sketch briefly some of the principal events which occurred on Colonel Olcott's northern tour.

At Poona, Damodar K. Mavalankar, the chela of Mahatma Koot Hoomi, before spoken of, joined the party, which had previously consisted of four persons, viz. - Colonel Olcott, two Native members of the Madras Society, and myself. Poona was the place at which Colonel Olcott last treated patients by mesmerism, and great was the disappointment of the branches at all the places, which were subsequently visited, on learning that the Colonel had received peremptory orders from his *Guru* (his immediate superior and teacher) to desist from further treatment for some time. The fact was that the Colonel had benevolently given away so much of his vitality (having treated thousands of sufferers in the course of a single year) that it was necessary to allow recuperative action to take place, so that he might be spared for the onerous and legitimate duties of his office. Accordingly, at all the places subsequently visited, Colonel Olcott confined himself to teaching the members who happened to be medical men, or who evinced special interest in the subject, the art of healing by transfusion of vitality. So much for the mesmeric treatment of disease, which formed but a small part of the worthy Colonel's labours.

From Poona we went to Bombay, the west-

ern capital of India and former head-quarters of the Theosophical Society. Here one notices particularly the nation of the Parsis, who, though differing in nationality and customs from the Hindu nation, yet live on terms of brotherly good feeling, thus setting an example to the Anglo-Indians, who never can forget the *material* superiority on which they pride themselves. In the Branch Society in Bombay there are many Parsi gentlemen, who, by the light of the Esoteric Doctrine, can recognise in the "Sacred Fire" their national representation of the seventh or universal principle.

In order to give a detailed account of Colonel Olcott's tour from Bombay, northwards to Lahore, and thence to the glittering Himalayas at Cashmere, it would be necessary to write a special treatise on the subject, but as my object is rather to show how I became a searcher after hidden truth and to give a few experiences in the search, I shall confine myself to speaking of a few of the places on our journey which call for special mention.

After a journey of twenty-six hours by rail from Bombay, we arrived at Jubbulpore, and we may take this place as offering an example of Colonel Olcott's labours throughout India.

Throughout the day he discusses questions in Theosophy with all who may come to pay him visits, and many are the learned pundits who express their satisfaction at finding one who, though highly trained in western modes of thought, is yet so learned in the sacred writings of the East. In the evenings he lectures on Aryan Science and Philosophy to large and enthusiastic audiences, and here it may not be out of place to say a word or two in regard to the worthy lecturer himself.

He speaks with the earnestness of one who knows the truth of what he says, and his appeals to this audiences to study the records of the

Eastern civilization, of which the Western is but a feeble copy, are not likely to be forgotten. The revival of Sanscrit learning, which is taking place all over the Continent of India, and the sense of national self respect which is felt to be everywhere arising, are recognised to be due in a measure to the public efforts of Colonel H. S. Olcott.

At Jubbulpore a phenomenon took place. A phenomenon the affirmation in regard to which would with difficulty be accepted in a court of law. Yet I shall attempt to put the facts in writing, because I *know* that they occurred. On the evening of the lecture, Colonel Olcott, Damodar, several fellows of the Society and I drove together to the place of public meeting. There the Colonel delivered an impressive address to a large audience, and so marked was the national feeling awakened that a subscription for the formation of a Sanscrit School was commenced immediately thereafter. Among all the contributors perhaps the most enthusiastic were the teachers and students of the public high school, the former sacrificing a whole month's salary and the latter the scholarships which they had won. The sum of 1,700 rupees was raised for this good object on this single occasion, and the Sanscrit School at Jubbulpore will soon be *un fait accompli*.

The meeting terminated, we returned to our host's bungalow just as we had come, the party being formed of the Colonel, Damodar, some other brothers and myself, and it is at this point that the mysterious element begins. On our return, both Colonel Olcott and I asked Damodar how he had enjoyed the lecture, and were to our amazement informed that he had not been present - in fact was conscious of having been elsewhere. This was indeed astonishing, looking to the fact that he had been seemingly in our company at the lecture and had not been out of our presence for

some hours; but now we have got to learn that the "Damodar" who was with us was a high chela (now an initiate) of the Mahatma K.H.

Again it is worthy of notice that during the lecture some three or four majestic figures had attracted my particular attention. They did not seem to hang upon the lips of the speaker, as did the rest of the audience, but remained calmly dignified, occasionally only exchanging pleasant glances and throughout seemingly more familiar with the subject treated of than the Lecturer himself. I was not surprised to learn afterwards that some Mahatmas had been present at the meeting in astral form. All this accounts, to my mind, for the enthusiasm of the meeting, especially over the subject of the Sanscrit School, for it is well known that Mahatma K.H. was a Brahmin of high birth, and has not yet lost entirely his patriotic fervour.

And now let us proceed to Allahabad, at which place we were the guests of the "Prayag Psychic Theosophical Society." At this ancient city a most stirring lecture was delivered, and here also a large sum was raised for the formation of a Sanscrit School. Here I saw *and recognised* the Mahatma.

Although I was enabled to look at him but for a minute I knew that it was he and recognised him by his portrait, which I had scrutinized some weeks before. On our return to the bungalow at which we were being entertained my impression was corroborated by Damodar, who volunteered the remark that his master had been there. Damodar, I may remark, had not been at the lecture.

By those who rely upon the acquisition of knowledge by the ratiocinative process solely, all this will be put aside as not providing any evidence whatever, and to critics of the order of the *St. James's Gazette* and *Saturday Review* it will

appear as worse than foolish; but to those of the most modern (and also the most ancient) school, who recognise the failure of science to lie in its neglect of the spiritual faculty of intuition, the statement of my experiences will, I hope, be full of meaning. Theosophical writers have in all ages dwelt largely on this mode of thought, and among the most modern exponents of natural religion we may reckon Wordsworth, who writes:

“Nor less I deem that these are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress,
That we can feed this mind of ours
In a wise passiveness.”

and the late Lord Lytton, who says in *Zanoni*:

“In some feelings there is all the strength and
all the Divinity of Knowledge.”

Allahabad may be taken as an example of true culture, and among our Fellows there we may reckon some of the most intellectual and spiritual in India. Indeed I may assure the Society's Fellows in America and Europe that it will be difficult to produce gentlemen with the great and varied attainments which are possessed by the Fellows of the many Theosophical Societies spread over this vast continent. The average of graduates in our societies in India is large, and we know that the standard of education which the Universities of Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras provide, is high, so far as materialistic science goes.

But in regard to learning in the East, one thing especially is discernible, and that is that the true Indian scholar is not usually carried away by a sense of his own importance. Among the educated “natives” of Europe and America education and conceit not infrequently go hand in hand,

but the natives of Hindustan have learned enough to know the relative littleness of personal knowledge, and are thus enabled to preserve a healthy philosophical equilibrium. The Indian scholar is a follower of the faculty of Divine Perception, “the inward eye which is the bliss of solitude,” the Intuition of which we have been speaking. This it is which proves a lamp unto his feet and light unto his path. It is by means of *this* that he perceives that intellectual science is but dross, if there be not added to it a science of a loftier character - the science of Divinity - the Esoteric Doctrine.

Moradabad was visited on 10th November, and there an event occurred which furnished a proof of the much doubted fact that an occultist can project his inner self or soul instantaneously to any place at any distance.

Colonel Olcott, as we have seen, had been ordered by his *Guru* to desist from treating patients until further notice, and, when application was made to him by Mr. Shankar Singh, of Moradabad, on behalf of two orphan children, he was under the necessity of refusing the request. Damodar, however, became interested in the matter, and said that he would ask for permission to be granted for this special case. His *Guru*, as we know, is Mahatma Koot Hoomi, while Colonel Olcott's and Madame Blavatsky's *Guru* is Mahatma M—, but by going to Adyar, in astral body, Damodar was enabled, through Madame B—, to communicate with Mahatma M— without the knowledge of the Colonel. Accordingly, Damodar retired to his room, went into *Samadi*, projected himself to Adyar, Madras (a distance as the crow flies, of over a thousand miles) and returned in a few minutes with a message from Mahatma M—. The Mahatma had spoken along the communication line established between himself in the Himalayas (where he resides) and his Chela,

Madame Blavatsky, at Adyar. At Moradabad the words were taken down to dictation and the document signed and authenticated by all the gentlemen present. Damodar had informed us that he had requested Madame Blavatsky to corroborate the fact of his astral visit by telegram and to repeat the words of Mahatma M— heard through “the Shrine.” Next morning a deferred night message was received from Madame B—, which was officially marked as having been dispatched twenty-five minutes after the time of Damodar’s reported visit, and in it the visit was fully corroborated and the Master’s words repeated *verbatim*. The telegram was opened in the presence of those who had heard the message dictated on the previous day, and is in the following terms: “Voice from Shrine says ‘Henry can try parties once, leaving strongly mesmerized Cajaputte oil-rub three times daily to relieve suffering. Karma cannot be interfered with.’ Damodar heard voice. - Telegram sent at his request.” - *Vide Theosophist* for December 1883, pp. 88-89.

Some important incidents might be recorded in connexion with the Colonel’s visit to Lucknow and Delhi, and also perhaps with my own and Mr. Naidus’ special tours to Gorakhpore, to Rawal Pindi, and Peshawur, but the place to which our narrative really next pertains is the City of Lahore. Here, as elsewhere, Colonel Olcott delivered stirring addresses to large audiences; but Lahore has a special interest, because there we saw, in his own physical body, Mahatma Koot Hoomi himself.

On the afternoon of the 19th November, I saw the Master in broad daylight, and recognised him, and on the morning of the 20th he came to my tent, and said “Now you see me before you in the flesh; look and assure yourself that it is I,” and left a letter of instructions and silk handkerchief,

both of which are now in my possession.

The letter is as usual written seemingly with blue pencil, is in the same handwriting as that in which is written communication received at Madras, and has been identified by about a dozen persons as bearing the caligraphy of Mahatma Koot Hoomi. The letter was to the effect that I had first seen him in visions, then in his astral form, then in body at a distance, and that finally I now saw him in his own physical body, so close to me as to enable me to give to my countrymen the assurance that I was from personal knowledge as sure of the existence of the Mahatmas as I was of my own. The letter is a private one, and I am not enabled to quote from it at length.

On the evening of the 21st, after the lecture was over, Colonel Olcott, Damodar and I were sitting outside the *shamiana*,⁴ when we were visited by Djual Khool (the Master’s head Chela, and now an Initiate), who informed us that the Master was about to come. The Master then came near to us, gave instructions to Damodar, and walked away.

On leaving Lahore the next place visited was Jammoo, the winter residence of His Highness the Maharajah of Cashmere. Colonel Olcott had been specially invited, and was received and entertained as a distinguished guest. Here everything presents a novel aspect to the stranger. Being a native state and independent of British rule, one is enabled from it, to form an idea of the pomp and splendour of ancient Aryavarta. “Native” Statesmen Councillors and Judges, “native” Generals and Officers of Court reflect their glory on the Maharajah, who is literally and absolutely “The Monarch of all he surveys.”

Our party was kindly provided with elephants and horses for private use, and we

⁴Pavilion or pandal.

enjoyed a most inspiring holiday in full view of the Himalayan Mountains.

At Jammoo I had another opportunity of seeing Mahatma Koot Hoomi *in propria persona*. One evening I went to the end of the "compound,"⁵ and there I found the Master awaiting my approach. I saluted in European fashion, and came, hat in hand, to within a few yards of the place on which he was standing. . . . After a minute or so he marched away, the noise of his footsteps on the gravel being markedly audible.

I need not dwell upon the disappearance of Damodar for several days, for he himself has told us his experience, and in whose company he spent his time (*vide Theosophist* for January 1884, pp. 61 and 62), but while he was away I received, by occult means, another letter from his Master. It was enclosed in an envelope, which had been addressed by Madame G—, and had come by post from Germany. This was very significant, because it proved, to my mind, that the master was aware of the part which Madame G— had had in bringing me into the light of Theosophy. The writing is the same as usual and the contents are as follows:—"I have pleasure in granting, in part at least, your request. Welcome to the territory of our Kashmir Prince. In truth my native land is not so far away but that I can assume the character of host. You are not now merely at the threshold of Tibet, but also of all the wisdom it contains. It rests with yourself how far you shall penetrate both, one day. May you deserve the blessings of our *chobans*.—K.H."

After a tour which had extended almost over the whole length of the Indian Empire, our homeward journey was commenced. Short visits, full of pleasing incidents, were made to Kapurthala, Jeypore and Baroda, and the party finally reached

Adyar upon the 15th of December. Preparations were then made for the Society's Anniversary, held on 27th and 28th December, on which occasion delegates from Branch Societies in India, Ceylon, Europe and America attended and most important questions were discussed.—(*Vide Journal of the Theosophical Society and Theosophist* for January 1884.)

To the several phenomenal occurrences, which took place during our anniversary gathering, many of the gentlemen present can testify; but I shall confine my remarks to two or three incidents within my own experience.

During the last evening session of the Convention the Officers and Councillors for the ensuing year were being chosen. It had been determined to give the overworked President founder a number of assistants, and on his asking me if I would accept such an appointment I replied that, if my chosen Master (meaning Mahatma Koot Hoomi) should so decide, the accepting of such an honourable post would be a pleasure. Thereupon Damodar was hurried off to the main building (situated about one hundred yards from the pavilion or *pandal* in which we were assembled) being asked to communicate with his Master, whose answer he would receive through the usual means (the so-called Shrine.) In a few moments he came running with a note in his hand. It was in Mahatma Koot Hoomi's handwriting and bore the following message:—"it is my desire that Mr. Brown should accept the appointment offered him."

I shall now have pleasure in presenting an experience of a somewhat different character.

Having heard that Mahatma Koot Hoomi was at Mysore, I wrote a letter to him (my first) upon the 16th of December, in which I asked if I might be permitted to come and see him in the flesh once more, giving as a reason the desire to

⁵Private enclosure

make this present narrative, which I then anticipated writing, convincing to the Western reader. This letter I wrote without its contents being known to any second party, and I myself sealed it thoroughly. It was at my request placed in "the Shrine," in my presence, and in about a minute it was gone. Damodar who officiated, then said "My Master tells you to have patience." Next evening my letter was returned by occult means, unopened and with seal intact, in the presence of H. R. Morgan (Major General), Mrs. Morgan, F. Hartmann, M.D. (Munich) Mohini M. Chatterjee, M.A., B.L. (Calcutta), and several other Fellows of the Theosophical Society. The address (to the Master Koot Hoomi) was scored out and my name in blue pencil substituted. In the presence of several witnesses I had thus the satisfaction of opening the envelope, which I myself had closed, and, in addition to my own letter, which was there as I had placed it, there was, in the well-known handwriting, the following gracious and pertinent reply:—"I have told you through Damodar to have patience for the fulfilment of your desire. From this you ought to understand that it cannot be complied with for various reasons. First of all it would be a great injustice to Mr. Sinnett, who after three years of devoted work for the society, loyalty to myself and to the cause, begged for a personal interview and was refused. Then I have left Mysore a week ago, and where I am you cannot come, since I am on my journey and will cross over at the end of my travels to China and thence home. On your last tour you have been given so many chances for various reasons. We do not do so much (or so little if you prefer) even for Chelas until they reach a certain stage of development, necessitating no more use and abuse of power to communicate with them. You can say truthfully as a man of honour, "I have seen

and recognised my Master, was approached by him and even touched." What more would you want? Anything more is impossible for the present. Young friend, study and prepare . . .—Be patient, content with little, and never ask for more if you would hope to ever get it. My influence will be over you and this ought to make you feel calm and resolute.—K.H."

And now I relate my concluding incident and bring my lengthy narrative to a close. Having intimated to Mahatma Koot Hoomi my desire to become a Chela of "The Brothers," I presented myself on the evening of the 7th of January 1884 for acceptance on probation.

On that occasion I was warned as to the difficulties of the road, which I desired to tread, but was assured that by a close adherence to truth, and trust in "My Master," all must turn out well.

THE NEW YORK SCHOOL OF MAGIC

A DISCIPLE OF THE ADEPT LADY TELLS OF LEVITATIONS.

THE SCIN LECCA AND HOW IT AND OTHER WONDERS ACCORD WITH NATURAL LAW.

[From the *New York World*, Wednesday 28
March 1877, 2]

To the Editor of The World.

SIR: Considering that your reporter took no stenographic notes during his interview with Mme. Blavatsky the other evening, he has given a remarkably fair account of what was said by that lady. He did, however, permit certain inaccuracies to creep in, which I ask permission to correct.

The report in to-day's paper contains the following:

"The WORLD reporter-Is it fair to say that magic is the exercise of power in contravention of known natural laws?"

"Mme. Blavatsky-No. The natural laws are not to be transgressed. What science calls the natural laws can every one of them be broken, but the real laws of nature cannot."

This conveys an impression very different from what Mme. Blavatsky said or your intelligent representative intended to represent her as saying. She is too learned a person, too familiar with the actual progress of Occidental science, to affirm that every one of what science calls natural laws can be broken. What she believes (and made the rest of us understand) is that the assumption by our Western men of science that all

the laws of nature are discovered and that no phenomena in contravention of them can occur, is wholly unwarranted by fact. In short, that the real laws and limitations of nature are only understood in those Eastern countries where force-correlation is no mystery-where magic is still regarded as a science and practically demonstrated.

In support of this view she instanced the current notions about the attraction of gravitation. That solid bodies unsupported by physical props would not necessarily fall to the ground, she argued from the levitation of the human body, certified to by numerous trustworthy witnesses, and the transport of suspension in mid-air of inanimate material objects. The Prince of Wales and his staff witnessed a fakir so levitated, in full day and under circumstances precluding the possibility of trick or illusion. Louis Jacolliot, the learned French author, saw it done in his own bungalow by the Fakir Kovindasamy: Lucian, who will certainly not be charged with credulity, says (IV., 280-281, Ed. Lipsise) that when visiting a certain shrine in Asia the high priest was levitated. 'I will tell also,' says Lucian, "another thing which he did in my presence. The priests, lifting, brought him, but he left them down on the ground while he himself was borne alone in the air."

What Lucian and multitudes of ancient witnesses saw, the Prince of Wales, his staff, Louis Jacolliot and many hundreds more have seen in our day. Then again, to leave magic and magicians wholly aside and come to that crude and unregulated thing, modern Spiritualism, we have a large number of cases of levitation reported by such unimpeachable witnesses as Dr. John W. Gray and Dr. L.S. Warner and others, of New York; Mr. Crookes, Karl Dunraven, William Hewitt, S.C. Hall, Lord Adair, Lord Lindsay and others, of London, and Prince Wittgenstein, of Russia.

The calendar of the Romish Church contains numerous instances of ecstasies who have been caught up into the air, and who have since-like St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Ignatius Loyola-been canonized.

Finally, the records of witchcraft, including the Salem outbreak of 1692, present examples of this phenomenon. The body of one Margaret Rule, of Salem, was visibly raised from the bed, in the night of witnesses, and held suspended by some invisible power for a considerable while.

To all these testimonies to the fact of levitation Mme. Blavatsky added her own, which is perhaps as credible as any other's, being founded upon some thirty years' personal experience in Eastern countries. She maintained, therefore, that our Western scientists had yet much to learn about the law of gravitation.

Another natural law, supposed fixed and untransgressible, is that a man cannot live when cut open and disembowelled. But Mme. Blavatsky had seen a hundred proofs that this is an unwarranted assumption: Self-mutilation, self-dismemberment, self-disembowelling, the exposure of the human body to fire, without chemical or other preparation; inhumation for days, weeks and even months, and subsequent resuscitation—these all show that our biologists know next to

nothing of the law of animal life. It is useless to deny facts easily verifiable by any one who will take the trouble to go where they can be seen, or who has the courage and self-denial to develop those latent powers common to all men.

Mme. Blavatsky referred her interrogator to the “*Souvenirs d'un Voyage dans la Tariaire, le Thibet et la Chine*,” by the Abbe Huc; to the “*Report of the Embassy to Siam in the Seventeenth Century*,” by M. de la Loubere, Ambassador of Louis XIV of France, and to other works.

The Abbe Huc says that it was no uncommon thing in those parts for the lamas to cut themselves open, expose their entrails, and then, bringing the severed edges together, with a few passes of the hand to cause the wound to heal instantaneously without leaving a scar. “This spectacle,” says the Abbe, “atrocious and disgusting as it is, is nevertheless very common in the lamaseries of Tartary.” Other powers of a like kind, he adds, “are less grandiose and more in vogue. These they practice at home and not on public solemnities. They will heat a piece of iron red-hot and lick it with their tongues. They will make incisions in their bodies, and an instant after not the least trace of the wound remains.”

The Princess Belgiojosa, in her “*Souvenirs de Voyage en Asie Mineure et en Syrie*,” gives a most thrilling account of similar feats performed in her presence by dancing dervishes, who cut and hacked each other with daggers, and then had their wounds instantly healed by the chief laying his hand upon the place.

In your editorial comments upon the reporter's account of the interview, you say that “if Mme. Blavatsky knows what she is talking about,” the Thibetan lamasery “is the school of strange knowledge.” Let me ask whether the concurrent testimony of every reputable traveller not incapable of telling the truth by reason of religious or

scientific preconception does not show that she is only talking about what others besides herself have seen, and any one may see for himself. She never puts herself forward as an "adept" but nevertheless is constantly doing things that are commonly associated with initiation into mystical knowledge.

The flitting of the shadows (for the reflected images of two even instead of one were seen to pass and repass twice) before the window was the most striking of proofs that the law of animal life is not fully comprehended in civilized Europe and America. What your reporter and five other witnesses saw was the projection of the *Scin Lecca*, or astral body, of an adept whose physical form was at that moment asleep at the other side of the ocean. Bulwer describes this phenomenon with vividness in his "Strange Story." To learn how to disentangle the inner from the outer man and travel whithersoever one wills, always retaining one's consciousness, is the highest feat of magic. The shadows we saw that night I personally have seen often, and know and have conversed with. I may add as a sequel to your reporter's narrative that one of the witnesses, a physician living in Baltimore, but then here for a few days' visit saw the shadow of the larger of the two men outside his window that night when about to retire. His bedroom was in the fourth story of a hotel. The gentlemen is one of the coolest of observers.

One word more. The tape-climbing feat repeated by your reporter from the lips of Mme. Blavatsky has been seen by many European travellers. In Colonel Yule's admirable translation of the "Book of Ser Marco Polo" this feat and every other described or practically exemplified by the learned Russian lady, is reported in detail. There was a time when the narrative of Marco Polo was regarded as a tissue of barefaced lies-obviously

because it contained so many evidences against Christianity, chronological scientific and philosophical-but as "Appletons New Cyclopedia" justly admits, "there is now no doubt that he spoke the truth."

It may suit the prejudice of the hour to jest over the Thibetan lamaseries and the alleged powers of their denizens, and to fling the epithet of "liar" at Mme. Blavatsky's head, as gingerly as our ideas of breeding may permit, but witnesses are accumulating in this very city that that distinguished lady and profound scholar makes no false assertions nor displays any tricks of charlatanry. As Colonel Yule remarks about the tape-climbing reported by Marco Polo, it is impossible to think that so many witnesses in different countries and at different times, who have seen this feat, should have agreed together to propagate a falsehood.

My name and address are at your disposal as also are those of all the others present on the occasion in question. The party included one lawyer, two physicians and two writers for the press, besides myself.

Levitation and Other Light Matters

[From the *New York World*, Tuesday 27 March 1877: 4]

Far be it from us to enter into any controversy with a magician. We are too well read in the "Arabian Nights" to commit such a folly as that, and only desire to remain on good terms with those powerful beings who in the twinkling of an eye might transform us into a Third avenue car-horse or a writer on the *Tribune*. Neither do we wish to discuss theories which are confessedly too subtle for the European or American mind. They are altogether too thin for controversy. The correctness of THE WORLD reporter must be defended, however; and to the correspondent who undertakes to correct our report of Mme. Blavatsky's conversation on lamaseries we suggest that the sentence, "What science calls the natural laws can every one of them be broken, but the real laws of nature cannot," seems to convey succinctly and correctly the very idea which he is at so much pains to elucidate in a column letter. To the clumsy Anglo-Saxon mind the use of the word "calls" explains the whole thing. The law of gravitation may possibly be one of those which are merely called natural laws as distinguished from those which are really so; but the illustrations given by our correspondent do not disprove the Newtonian theory, but simply show that he does not understand it. If Eastern fakirs do rise in the air we presume they ascend, like smoke, in obedience to the law of gravity, not in spite of it. Your fakir merely goes up because he is for the time being lighter than the atmosphere. The faculty of fakirs for levitation should not be taken

for granted too readily, however, notwithstanding the cloud of witnesses that testify to it. The most celebrated of these Indian adepts was long known as the "man who sits in the air." He was accustomed to sit comfortably aloft in the air, smoking a pipe and having his legs crossed in the true Oriental fashion. He had no visible means of support, except that he had one hand laid carelessly on the top of a tallpole, which he had used to climb to his elevated perch. He always made preparations for ascending within a tent, and stipulated before exhibiting the feat that no examination of his person should be made. He explained his stipulation on the ground of religious scruples; but it was found afterwards that he had more substantial reasons for it. After he had been the wonder of the Europeans in India for years, it was discovered that he had a neat iron chair in the seat of his baggy trousers, and that an iron rod attached to it, and bent to follow the shape of his arm, ran down to the palm of his hand and fitted over the top of the pole upon which he was poised. A British officer, notwithstanding the clumsiness of the European intellect, contrived to sit in the air in the same way, but as he made no secret of how the feat was done and had not graduated at a lamasery he won no renown by the performance. As to our correspondent's assertion that the people in India can live after they have been cut open and disembowelled, we have only one thing to say, to wit, that this acquirement must be the source of great comfort during the famine season. The tendency of the Anglo-Saxon mind, however, is toward a preference for the retention of the bowels and their employment in their

functions as part of the human machinery. This prejudice is strongly put by the learned Edmund Burke in his "Reflections on the Revolution in France:" "In Enland we have not yet been completely embowelled of our natural entrails. We still feel within us, and we cherish and cultivate, those inbred sentiments which are the faithful guardians, the active ministers of our duty, the true supporters of all liberal and manly morals. We have not been drawn and trussed in order that we may be filled, like stuffed birds in a museum, with chaff and rags and paltry blurred shreds of paper about the rights of man. We preserve the whole of our feelings still native and entire, unsophisticated by pedantry and infidelity." So strong is this prejudice that the substance of it has passed into a proverb, and the most abusive epithet we apply to a person is to say that he is a man of no bowels.

BookReviews

THE WAY TO THE LABYRINTH: MEMORIES OF EAST AND WEST.

By Alain Daniélou. Translated by Marie-Claire Courmand. New York: New Directions Books, 1987. Pp. 338. \$13.95 paper.

François Mauriac enquired, “Who will write the mystery of the Daniélous?”. In part perhaps, this fascinating memoir replete with sassy and illuminating aperçus will have to serve for the present. Surely a piece of a puzzle that troubles the attention, this work deserves careful re-reading in order to reconstruct not only past relationships but also the author’s influence on the current state of affairs at the Theosophical Society’s Adyar Library in India as a result of his tenure as librarian there over thirty-five years ago. Things are much the way he left them and but for his innovations, many valuable books by this time would probably have been reduced to dusty, worm-eaten shells.

The candor of a good French artist such as this certainly may not please everyone, but his refreshing honesty sets the tone:

The fact that I had so many interests, such a total lack of ambition, that I had no ties of any kind and never sought a career or a conventional place in society, created the very conditions that made it possible for me to become a link between two civilizations. (2)

Daniélou deals with personal interests and perceived social inequities which currently arouse

considerable sympathy somewhat at length though his whining seems a bit out of place in the case of so determined a professional outsider and practical mystic. Even if, as he says, ‘In a world based on systems of belief, free spirits tend to lead marginal lives,’ (312) social convention generally seems intent on keeping order in an otherwise unruly world of uneven mentality and ability, where such progress, social-scientific-artistic, is a slowly learned process hardly measured by any reasonable standard. When repeatedly asking why human nature is so limited in its apparent lack of understanding, surely he could concede that social conditioning in all parts of the world is a contributory factor that makes it so. It is not a fact of life that just because one class—or caste—may understand its own inherent obligations clearly that all others do, too. Rather more likely only those executive personalities, evolved or not, who are leaders in said groups may be able to recognize broader aspects on occasion. To evaluate another culture arbitrarily in terms specifically used amongst Hindus involves an exercise in semantics that may make an imprecise comparison with Western tradition.

The reader would do well to start with the last chapter and read forward as a sense of greater continuity might be gained. This elegant panegyric in praise of things peninsular, Indic and Eurasian has an aroma that cannot be bettered by the accomplishment of smoking Joss sticks or the liquid bubble of twanging instruments. What serves to amuse to a great extent is the manner in which contradictions of social life at higher levels appear as combatants joust and jostle for ap-

plause.

Had it not been for Raymond Burnier, would this memorial have been written and would Alain Daniélou have believed that their shared ambitions had been fulfilled? Daniélou, a scion of an ancient Celtic Breton family (the Clamorgans) on his mother's side, and Burnier, of grand bourgeois Swiss origin that included a minor Russo-Baltic lineage, made a formidable combination with their essentially hedonistic and romantic outlook on life, but an impractical view implemented early on allowed Daniélou to keep his balance as he comments, 'I already sensed that the religion of men had nothing to do with the divine reality of the world'. (6) It seems that the cause of so many personal problems that inconvenienced them both later owed to the fact that others failed to comprehend and embrace that truth.

Sometimes it happens that the reader who wants to learn more of the real Daniélou and the source of his later interests is hard put to hone in on the facts of his development. This reviewer suggests starting with the years our author spent in America at St. John's College, Annapolis, Maryland, which came about when a former French ambassador to Washington had a few scholarships for study on offer. He was eighteen and happily survived the stay from 1925 to 1927. His father thought a knowledge of languages would be useful if the necessity arose to pursue a consular career, luckily avoided.

Upon returning to France in the summer of 1927, Daniélou became acquainted with Zaher, destined to become the future King of the Afghans (and may yet if the present mess is ever sorted out). Zaher's father, Nadir Shah, invited Daniélou to pay him a visit, and *voilà*, 'That was how I came to discover the Orient ...'. (69)

This was followed by a stint in the French

navy at Toulon, made the more bearable by frequenting Parisian art centers while on leave. Then, in 1929, the Governor of Algeria, at the request of Daniélou père who was working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs under Briand, offered him a grant to study Arab music. The point of departure for his fame as an ethno-musicologist in years ahead began then, along with the gifts of sufficient leisure and patience.

Clearly the turning point in Daniélou's life was the meeting with Raymond Burnier¹ at Villefranche, near Nice, on the Riviera in the summer of 1931. Both were in a sense complementary to the other and of course it helped matters materially to have had Raymond's maternal grandfather invent a condensed milk product for children called Nestlé, which became immensely popular. Their entire attitude toward life could be summarized in this quote, 'We always appeared to be poking fun at everything—not because we were frivolous, but in an attempt to discredit false thinking and get to the bottom of things'. (78)

Their travels onward began by going to Venice in April 1932, in style of course, and from there on the good ship Conte Rosso to Bombay. With an obligatory visit to the Elephanta caves secured, they hired a car and drove through the Khyber Pass to Kabul (Afghanistan) to visit the King and renew acquaintance with Zaher. Without royal authorization, they went on their own nothing daunted to Jellālābad (recently the scene of heavy fighting in the Afghan conflict), well entertained en route. The experience was recorded on film in an interesting documentary. Georges Henry Rivière, the famous ethnologist, put together a large exhibition of Raymond's

¹ The International President of the Theosophical Society is the widow of Raymond Burnier.

photographs which can still be seen at the Musée de l'Homme, Paris's anthropological museum. (85)

Returning to India after the Afghan adventure, character sketches are provided of prominent Indian and European figures in artistic and political circles met along the way, introductions to whom were facilitated to some degree by Alain's sister, Christine, who became manager of the girls' residence at Tagore's arts center, Shantiniketan, in 1934, and later, in the early 1940s, director of Alliance Française in Calcutta. Those were truly the years when the going was good.

How many people today remember the name of Alice Boner? This Zurich artist, who had inherited a large fortune in industry, helped found a well-known Kathakali dance school in Kerala; advanced the career of Uday Shankar after his talent had suffered under the doubtful patronage of Pavlova; and whose most lasting contribution to Indian dance was in the field of costume. 'What passes today for the traditional costumes of Indian ballet was in fact invented by an artist from Zurich' (91) by having liberated Indian dancers from very heavy outfits inspired by ancient frescoes and medieval sculptures. She died in 1975 at Benares, close to the palace in which Alain and Raymond lived for some fifteen years (1939-1953).

Visits to Shantiniketan for a few months each year after 1932 are written of with obvious affection. Regretfully Daniélou abandoned the idea of running the music school there, settling for spending a few years travelling between India, Paris and various other places before settling permanently in Benares.

Daniélou and Burnier began a long stay in India in March 1939. Two years earlier they had been alerted that a three storey palace belonging to the Maharajah of Rewa was to be had for \$100

monthly and both felt that it would be better to put up at a marble-balconied palace fronting on the Ganges rather than at Clark's Hotel, then located amid the garish British military section right outside the city. And what a wickiup Rewa Kothi was, flanked by circular balcony and gallery, eighty-foot hall and sixteen-foot ceiling; and with an open-work loggia that looked out upon the river.

The incredibly poetic atmosphere which surrounded them of folk musicians and Brahmin priests ministering to the faithful strikes a nostalgic chord matched perhaps by wilder phantasies from the Arabian Nights. We learn from the author that he first became interested in Indian religion and philosophy from the works of René Guénon, the scholar who also influenced Coomaraswamy and Eliade.

'A man born outside of India is considered a *mleccha*, a barbarian who is assimilated with the lowest castes of artisans ... If he observes the proprieties and taboos, however, he is allowed to be instructed in the highest teachings of traditional philosophy and science'. (136) Many Westerners, even theosophists, have difficulty trying to blend with Hindu society or find a place in it, try as they will, for in spite of the country's trend to greater openness, long standing traditions still prevail. But Daniélou came to deeper discovery of Hindu culture through an introduction to Swami Karpātrī in Benares, an influential holy man who later created the *Dharma* Sangh, a movement for the defense of Hinduism against modern trends. His first encounter with Hindu mythology, the significance of the different gods and their relationship to cosmological theories on the nature of the world led him farther into a study of the religion, so that the questions he posed to the swami were answered in a series of published articles which later formed the basis of his Bollingen

book, *Hindu Polytheism*, long the prime source for Western students. Both Daniélou and Burnier subsequently turned to the Shaivite cult of Hinduism and took names that would reflect starting life anew, with a new basis, new purposes, goals and duties. The process of development at the individual's own rate of speed is essential to that tradition, and often envied by those in others. At the same time, the cultural importance of any Indian city 'depends on the great traditional scholars who teach a few chosen disciples in their own homes'. Traditional Hindu studies which deal in rote memorization have nothing to do with education offered in India's modern universities. The two civilizations live side by side but are totally unaware of one another, and wage war against so-called ashrams which exploit people's gullibility, against theosophy, Aurobindo, Ramakrishna followers and especially against politicians. It always seemed true to this reviewer that most of the inhabitants of ashrams were usually Westerners.

The 1940s found the Indians uninterested in Europe's war as neither were most South Americans, and, having become a Hindu, Daniélou found his sympathies, along with most patriotic nationalist Indians turned towards Japan, a heroic Eastern land struggling against European imperialism. When World War II did come to an end, Alain and Raymond made trips to Calcutta and Kerala, easing the long period brought about by the international emergency.

In 1953 Alain Daniélou left Benares forever to become director of the Theosophical Society's Adyar Library. The invitation was offered by Sri Ram, then international president of the Society. Daniélou's description of the "spiritual center" of the Theosophical Society at Adyar should have been amplified, for he would seem to be referring to a group of its members who are required to live

by rules imposed by a human master to oversee an ascetic discipline to be learned and obeyed, by which an attempt has been made to establish an ethical system whose principle in the widest sense of the term is community-building. But it often happens, as Herbert Guenther has pointed out, 'that in this process the energy of the ethical impulse is gradually drained off into a set of rules which define the morality of the community. The ethical problem of existential "good" becomes neglected and the social problem of "right" conduct substituted for it and in the end confused with it'.² Whether expediency informs the activities of the Society there or elsewhere and defines its goals in a moot point.

What may be best to keep in mind when reading Daniélou's comments about Adyar is that as the average Westerner (which he isn't) believes himself in the midst of intrigues, then his assertive individualism has found no part in the collective consensus that is part of the Hindu mentality and ultimately becomes the price of his personal experience.

Adyar Library's services were greatly improved by Daniélou's contributions which included the up-grading of its bulletin of Sanskrit studies, now edited by the Honorary Chairman, Dr. K. Kunjunn Raja, former Chairman of Sanskrit studies at Madras University; publication of rare texts; and the preservation and restoration of manuscripts according to methods advanced by the French Bibliothèque Nationale. A new decimal system for classifying Sanskrit texts was employed and subsequently adopted by other libraries. It is fair to say that what Daniélou put into place in the 1950s remains with little change to this day. As one reads his further comments there is no doubt that Adyar had no place for an

²Herbert Guenther, *Kindly Bent to Ease Us* (Emeryville, CA 1975), 186.

innovative individual and that his only alternative was to resign his post in 1956 and move to Pondichéry. There he joined the Institute of Indology under its distinguished director, Jean Filliozat (who died in November 1981) and was asked to prepare a number of critical editions of Sanskrit texts. It must be altogether agreed 'that ashrams too often prevent much of any context with the real India and what teaching there is usually done in English is in a language quite ill-suited to Hindu conceptions'.

Thus after having spent 'twenty years of study in the most sophisticated circles of traditional Indian culture' Daniélou returned to Europe around 1960 to establish an Institute in the Monastery of San Giorgio in Venice from where he was able to carry out plans to promote the study and performance of Asian music. He lived in Italy thereafter with characteristic vitality and enthusiasm for everything that came to his attention. Staying on however also meant that he carried on without his friend, Raymond Burnier, who passed away at Zagarolo, Italy, near Rome apparently in 1968 after having put paid to a love that promised no future in India. If the moral of this cautionary tale is just possibly that Westerners will always be Westerners and Indians will always be Indians, then it isn't absolutely necessary for one group to try to adopt the lifestyle of the other or even dilute it so as to destroy the integrity of their own culture. It is commonly said that through a series of disillusionments we are led to the truth. Westerners, to quote Daniélou, 'often speak of Oriental "Wisdom" without realizing that this so-called wisdom is simply an attitude of realism in the pursuit of knowledge'. (328) And knowledge is inherently a closer observation and evaluation of facts that solve problems beyond immediate grasp. If that is the case, it is a surprise that no Western cult group has grown up around

the philosophy of, say, Luigi Pirandello.

One more thing. The Brahmin elite who constitute the sages in Benares and other Indian spiritual centers really touch the lives of a very small small percentage of the country's population. And fortunately they do not interfere with the general determination of the people to improve their standard of living according to their own, not Western-style, values. Notwithstanding any romantic inclination to let fatalism take its toll, government leaders in India make heroic efforts every day to stop the progressive deterioration of large cities and improve levels of health and education. It's there in all the papers every day, the *Hindu*, the *Times*, the *Express* and the rest.

Robert Boyd

RENÉ GUÉNON AND THE FUTURE OF THE WEST: THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF A 20TH-CENTURY METAPHYSICIAN. By Robin Waterfield. Wellingborough, Northants, UK: Crucible, 1987. Pp. 159. ISBN 0-85030-545-4 (paperback). £6.99.

Although this book has been available for some time, it deserves to be brought to wider attention as the only study in English of this important figure. René Guénon (born in Blois, 1886; died in Cairo, 1951) is of particular interest to Theosophical historians as the author of *Le Théosophisme, Histoire d'une Pseudo-Religion* (Paris, 1921; revised and augmented, 1928; edition supplemented with Guénon's reviews concerning Theosophy, Paris: Editions Traditionnelles,

1965 and reissues). Because he is relatively unknown in America, this review is mainly devoted to explaining Guénon's own significance. It follows that Waterfield's book is particularly valuable as an introduction to Guénon's life and thought, especially for those who do not read French.

By his early twenties, Guénon was deeply embroiled in Parisian esoteric circles. In 1908 he was attending the courses of the Christian Hermetist Paul Sédir at the "Ecole Hermétique" of Papus, but broke with the latter publicly at the Spiritualist-Masonic Congress when Papus insisted on the dogma of reincarnation—something for which Guénon had a lifelong aversion. In the same year, during an automatic-writing séance with a group of fellow Martinists, instructions were received for the foundation of an "Ordre du Temple Rénové" (O.T.R.), of which Guénon was to be the head. This did not materialize, but by the next year Guénon, now consecrated bishop in the neo-Gnostic Church of Fabre des Essarts, was writing articles which already embodied the essential doctrines of his later books.

There are many mysteries surrounding Guénon's early life and intellectual formation: mysteries which he made no effort to dispel, maintaining that his personality and private life were of no interest, his published works containing all that he wished to give the world. Among the sources of his knowledge and "initiation" (a concept on which he set great store) were the French Taoist Matgioi (= Albert de Pouvourville); the Swedish Sufi Ivan Aguéli; and certain Hindu contacts who have never been identified.

Guénon's first two books appeared in 1921. One was titled *Introduction Générale à l'Etude des Doctrines Hindoues*: it was submitted as a doctoral dissertation, but the degree was denied him, setting him henceforth at odds with the

academic study of religion. The other book was his history of Theosophy as a "pseudo-religion."

A number of Guénon's books have been translated into English, but not *Le Théosophisme*, nor its sequel *L'Erreur Spirite* (1923), which is a polemic against every sort of Spiritualism. For all their negativity, these books are a mine of information. Any advanced student of the place and function of Theosophy in the context of the history of ideas (which is not to say every Theosophist, by any means) should regard them as essential reading. Although one may disagree entirely with Guénon's conclusions, the experience is sure to be enriching, and one will learn things not easily to be found elsewhere. As one example, *Le Théosophisme* contains the essentials of the notorious series of articles on the Theosophical Society written for *La France Antimaçonique* by Narad Mani in 1911-13.

Guénon's metaphysical works are like a spider's web of adamant: so finely argued, so consistently and almost geometrically presented, so unsparing of sentiment in their adherence to the highest level of impersonal discourse. His many articles and books on symbology and on esoteric history are full of illuminating connections and breathtaking leaps across the world's traditions. His writings constitute a self-contained and self-consistent world which, virtually neglected in his lifetime, is now the focus of increasing interest among intellectuals, especially in Europe; as one proof of this, all his books are still in print. I would go further and say that, from the historian's point of view, H. P. Blavatsky and René Guénon are the two most important esotericists of our time, and that any view that pretends to universality must take both of them into consideration.

Guénon's condemnation of Theosophy rests on his claim that it lacks any grounding in

“Tradition” and the initiations that alone, in his view, carry the transmission of wisdom and the possibility of spiritual realization. By Tradition, Guénon means first the “Primordial Tradition” of our cycle; secondarily, the branches of it which manifest as the “great religions,” past and present. Outside these there is, in his opinion, no authentic initiation, hence only “pseudo-religions” and “counter-initiation.” In his own life, he gave up his attempts to bring the Roman Catholic Church to a realization of its own, Christian brand of esotericism, and ended his life as a Sufi, i.e., an esotericist within the Islamic tradition. How could he fail to be at daggers drawn with a movement whose master K. H. wrote, in the tenth Mahatma Letter, that “the chief cause of nearly two thirds of the evils that pursue humanity ever since that cause became a power..is religion under whatever form and in whatsoever nation?” Nevertheless, much of what Guénon writes of cosmology, symbology, metaphysics, and prehistory is in accord with the teachings of H. P. B., to whose *Secret Doctrine* he probably owed much more than he would ever have admitted.

These recommendations must be accompanied by a warning that Guénon, like H. P. B., is not always accurate. As Paul Bertrand showed in a brochure of 1922, *Théosophie et Théosophisme; Réponse à une critique de la Théosophie de M. René Guénon* (Paris: Publications Théosophiques), Guénon does not play fair. He cites mainly documents that are hostile to Theosophy, neglecting other witnesses. His documentation, apparently so secure, has a large element of *trompe l'oeil*, as he deforms statements by Olcott and others to suit his brief. Most disreputably and quite unfairly, Guénon castigates the Theosophists for their “moralism,” as if that were too lowly a concern for “initiates.” In short, Bertrand says, *Le Théosophisme* resembles a history of the

Catholic Church based on the Inquisition. Yet for the scholar, such a history might be invaluable, as containing insights and documents absent from the official version.

This explains why the publication of Robin Waterfield's book was a noteworthy and welcome event. Since its appearance, the author has also translated Luc Benoist's *The Esoteric Path: An Introduction to the Hermetic Tradition* (Wellingborough: Crucible, 1988), and has written on Julius Evola in *Gnosis* no. 14 (Winter 1990). He is not related to the Robin Waterfield who edits the Penguin “Arkana” series and translated the *Theology of Arithmetic* attributed to Iamblichus (Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1988).

Unlike the two standard French books on Guénon's life and works (Jean-Pierre Laurant: *Le Sens Caché selon René Guénon* [Paris: L'Age d'Homme, 1975]; Jean Robin: *René Guénon, Témoin de la Tradition* [Paris: Guy Trédaniel, 2nd augmented ed., 1986]), Waterfield's study does not pretend to cover the subject entirely, but rather to call it to the attention of English readers. It is fresh with the realizations of Waterfield's own discovery of this extraordinary philosopher, and of the problems that Guénon poses to every serious and open-minded reader. Facts are there, but always in a context of the attempt to understand and place Guénon sympathetically in his intellectual, social, national, and religious milieu.

Although disquieted and sometimes puzzled by his subject, Waterfield acts as the most courteous of guides to the labyrinths of Guénonian thought, ending with a moving attempt to rescue practical Christianity from Guénon's blanket condemnation of the modern West. Waterfield is an ecumenical Anglican; and Christianity is, in practice, a bhaktic path. Guénon's path and doctrine, on the other hand, were those of a gnani. In this book, therefore, we have the Way of Love trying

to embrace the Way of Knowledge—which is, perhaps, more promising than the other way round.

Joscelyn Godwin

LIVES IN THE SHADOW WITH J KRISHNAMURTI. By Radha Rajagopal Sloss. London: Bloombury, 1991. pp. xiii + 336. £17.99 ISBN 0 7475 0720 1.

Heroes - religious and secular - are becoming increasingly rare nowadays. In these cynical and suspecting times the *myth* of the hero is perceived solely through the tincture of a fairy tale, with a subliminal fatalism that can never be elevated to the harsh and uncompromising light of historical investigation. Just so, the denotation of the term 'myth' underwent a substantive degradative transformation that converted its sense from transformative truth to pretentious fiction. Is it any wonder that admirers and devotees are finding it increasingly difficult in sustaining and substantiating the myth of their heroes? Consider the cases of the two notable heroic subjects in recent times: the secular paragon John F. Kennedy and his religious opposite number Jiddu Krishnamurti. The moment that J.F.K. was assassinated in the winter of 1963, a moderately popular President underwent a metamorphosis approaching the Kafkaesque in dimension. Such a status remained in effect for many years until reports began to circulate in the popular press of his piccadillos. Recently, a most devastating assault on Kennedy, Thomas C. Reeves' *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy*

(New York: Free Press; Toronto: Collier Macmillan Canada; New York: Maxwell Macmillan International, 1991), has provided what many consider overwhelming evidence that Kennedy the myth was more the figment of the collective imagination of the populace. Similar questions have also been raised about that other modern day icon, Martin Luther King, much to the distress of his legion of admirers.

Similar assaults have been the norm for religious heroes as well. Whether it be Mary Baker Eddy, Joseph Smith, Ellen White, John Paul Twitchell, or the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, none have escaped substantive challenges to their status. And now Jiddu Krishnamurti, the recently deceased nonagenarian teacher and purveyor of the "pathless land." The book under review brings to mind Reeves' book, especially its title. Rather than expressing the theme of the book in such an obvious manner, its author, Radha Rajagopal Sloss, employs the more nubilous image of the "Shadow," *scilicet*, of fear, of unanswered potential, of darkness of land, the "twilight kingdom," the "dead land," the "cactus land," and "death's twilight kingdom" deriving from T.S. Eliot's "The Hollow Men":

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom¹

So here we have a memoir that does not call attention to the sainted and supernal Krishnamurti [neither does it totally ignore this side of his personality] but rather his darker side, an aspect that sometimes borders on the flagitious. Consequently, the image of the Shadow rather than the image of the Sun in Lady Emily

¹ The Shadow, itself derived from Ernest Dowson's "Cynara" ("*Non sum qualis eram bonae sub regno Cynarae*"—"I am not as I was under the reign of the good Cynara"—a poem referring to the frustrated desire of love:

Last night, ah, yesternight, betwixt her lips and mine
There fell thy shadow, Cynara! thy breath was shed
Upon my soul between the kisses and the wine:
And I was desolate and sick of an old passion....

The image of the "Hollow Men" prompts images of William Morris' "The Hollow Land," Rudyard Kipling's "The Broken Men," and most assuredly Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* (IV.ii):

When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;
But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and, like deceitful jades,
Sink in the trial.

Lutyens' *Candles in the Sun*²: "the sun being the World Teacher [K.] in whose light all the candles (those who awaited his coming) were dimmed." (247)

This controversial narrative cannot be dismissed as unsubstantiated mudraking based merely on hearsay, innuendo, and sensationalism, for the author possesses credentials that requires the reader to grant her account serious consideration.. As the daughter of Desikacharya and Rosalind Rajagopal, both of whom were close associates to Krishnamurti extending back to the years prior to his break with the Theosophical Society in 1929, Mrs. Sloss draws not only on her own reminiscences of living with J.K. in Ojai and Hollywood (California), but on the reminiscences and written records of her mother and, to a lesser extent, of her father. Her parents, in the words of a biographer, Pupul Jayakar,³ became, following the break in 1929, "guardians, *sarvadbikaris*, holders of authority around the young seer, taking over all decision-making in [his] personal life and the work connected with his teaching." D. Rajagopal assumed the role of President of Krishnamurti Writings Inc., the successor to the Star Publishing Trust, and the organization to which all donations were sent in support of Krishnamurti and his work.⁴ Rosalind was a nurse, companion, and helper to Krishnamurti during his years at Ojai (California) and was the Director of the Happy Valley School in Ojai for eighteen years until her retirement in 1964 — and much more.

It comes as no surprise that this book is

² Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1957.

³ *Krishnamurti: A Biography* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986), 84.

⁴ Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death* (N.Y.: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 82-3.

primarily focussed on Krishnamurti's relations with both the author's parents. Rajagopal's relationship with Krishnamurti is common knowledge due to the accounts found in Mary Lutyens' biographies⁵ and Sidney Field's memoir, *Krishnamurti: The Reluctant Messiah*⁶; his relationship with Rosalind, however, is no doubt far more astonishing and shocking. And so the book's merit rests primarily on the Rosalind Rajagopal-Krishnamurti relationship, a relationship that was both emotionally and sexually intimate for some twenty-five years. It is a story that contains within it a measure of romantic feelings, tenderness, and joy on the one hand, and on the other a naïveté mixed with often shocking incidents that call into question Krishnamurti's character. Aside from the obvious question of morality and the latent demands of celibacy and chastity placed upon Krishnamurti by the Theosophical Society (Adyar) and by his followers, one cannot resist the conclusion that we have before us a person trapped by the expectations of the leadership of the Theosophical Society, of his followers, even of his own teachings, forcing him to lead a double life: his public *persona* as the teacher who spoke with authority on the human condition, and his private *persona* as the fatherly "Krinsh" to the child Radha, the lover to Rosalind, the derogator of the theosophists, friends and protectors (including Mrs. Besant, who was supposedly like a mother to him [75]), and the "shadowy Krishna who could deceive and betray a man [Rajagopal]

upon whom he depended." (221)⁷ And the one person who fostered and responded to the affectionate side of his character - as 'wife' and lover in this case - was Rosalind Rajagopal, née Williams. Born in 1903 to a family in which some of its members had loose connections to Theosophy, here initial contact with Krishnamurti and his brother Nitya came through the efforts of her aunt, Erma Williams Zalk, who persuaded both Rosalind and those responsible for the brothers that she could be entrusted to care for the sickly Nitya while at Ojai in 1922. (54) This meeting quickly led to a budding love between Rosalind and Nitya, a love that was never to be consummated. Mrs. Sloss writes: "...because she only knew him for three years before his death, this love, with its innocent and magical quality, haunted not only her and her marriage, but also my childhood. Such love, etern[allized]

⁷ On this subject of duality of personality, it is well to consider Arthur H. Nethercot's observation in his *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1963), 450-1:

Here then is an extraordinary case of a man who, after a long and bizarre struggle with life, has finally got himself and his mind under almost complete control—has perhaps hypnotised himself so that he can relegate to oblivion most of the things he does not want to remember, because they recall the unhappy days when he was becoming an individual and was escaping from the domination of others whom he had cause to love and admire. One of his favourite discussion topics is that of "exploitation," by which he means the influence exerted on one human being by another to bring the other round to one's own point of view in order to use that individual for one's own purpose. When, however, I temerarily suggested that perhaps he might have been "exploited" by Annie Besant in that sense, he flared up in what I would have called an angry denial in any less philosophic a person than he. I should hate to think of him as a charlatan; I prefer to think of him as a sort of schizophrenic, or at least a man of a now permanently divided dual personality.

⁵ Ibid., passim.

⁶ Edited by Peter Hay (N.Y.: Paragon House, 1989), 103f. The book was reviewed in *Theosophical History* III/3: 88-89.

(sic) by death, may not survive the realities of a living relationship.” (55) As for Krishnamurti, she hardly noticed him, until the “process”⁸ that first manifested itself required Rosalind’s nursing. Although this episode is well-documented, it is not mentioned elsewhere that during Rosalind’s caring for him Krishnamurti “would put his head in her lap for comfort” and ... “sometimes fondled her breast,” which she, perhaps in her naïveté, thought was his need to be mothered. (60) This was, incidentally, Krishnamurti’s own assessment, who wrote that he mistook Rosalind “for my long lost mother,” guessing that she might be using Rosalind or perhaps has even reincarnated in Rosalind.⁹ By 1926, despite rumors [suspected by Mrs. Besant to have been generated by the rival leader of the Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society, Mme. Tingley (88)] in the press that Krishna was romantically linked with Rosalind (87), Rosalind’s growing attraction to Rajagopal led to their announced engagement later that same year, much to Mrs. Besant’s relief. Because the laws in the U.S. made it very difficult for interracial marriages with Orientals to take place (American women lost their citizenship and Orientals were not allowed to become American citizens), they were asked by Mrs. Besant to call

it off. (88) Instead of a wedding in the U.S., their marriage took place in London the following year (3 October) at St. Mary’s Liberal Catholic church. By 1929, she became pregnant with Radha. Krishnamurti’s reaction to her marriage and pregnancy was one of disapproval and so displayed a coolness toward them (88); when she became pregnant, Krishna responded by repeating his long time view that since ‘the Work’ must be uppermost, none close to him should have children. So negative was his reaction that Rosalind contemplated having an abortion, a portent to times to come. This displeasure on the part of Krishnamurti, speculates the object of the intended aborticide, was decidedly selfish: all who were his close associates were not expected to lead an independent life (109):

More than one person of talent was driven to abandon a promising career - fortunately not all succumbed. In this case, another reason may have been an emotional reaction he had at the thought of them having a child. When Nitya died Krishna had assumed that Rosalind would then be closest to him. Her marriage to Raja had probably been a shock that he had to endure in isolation. For them to have a baby was at the very least a further affront.

Yet after Radha was born, Krishnamurti took up the role of the father. In fact, years later, the author recounts many engaging stories about ‘Krinsh’ (the child’s pronunciation of Krishna), the pranks she played on him, the games they engaged in, indeed the fatherly role he assumed. In fact, so much was Krishnamurti a part of the Rajagopal family that the child Radha often identified her family as consisting of a Mummy, a Daddy, and a Krinsh. (129)

Part of the reason for this fatherly role was Raja’s work habits. Always working on behalf of Krishnamurti and often in poor health,

⁸ The “process,” referring to episodes of intense pain, sensitivity to sound, vivid recollections of boyhood incidents and occult visions (58-60), was and is considered by some to have been the first sign of a transformation wherein Krishnamurti, the Vehicle of the World Teacher or Maitreya, was gradually merging with the World Teacher himself. For further references, see Annie Besant, *How a World Teacher Comes* (London: Theosophical Publishing House Limited, 1926), Mary Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening* (London: John Murray, 1975), 165-6, and Hillary Rodrigues, *Insight and Religious Mind: An Analysis of Krishnamurti’s Thought* (N.Y.: Peter Lang, 1990), 8.

⁹ Lutyens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Awakening*, 166. Mention of this episode is also found in Nethercot’s *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, 343.

the opportunity for the “cuckoo in the other bird’s nest” (in the words of Mme. de Manziarly) arose:

...she (Rosalind) came to realize that he had been playing the role of her own child’s father for some months and had lavished on all the care and solicitude of a passionate and fond husband - a role from which Raja appeared to have withdrawn, enabling Rosalind to slip into a love affair that would last for more than twenty-five years. (117)

The love affair began in 1932, apparently begun by Krishnamurti knowing the condition of the marriage, in which the couple lived apart, especially after Rajagopal indicated that there was no more need for sex in the marriage, since a child had been born to them. From that time on, Krishnamurti lived the public life of a chaste and ‘perfect’ being while in private assuming the role of Rosalind’s lover.

That this ‘perfect’ being could have such a relationship would have been a *reductio ad absurdum* to the Theosophists, who would have been shocked enough had Krishna entered into a legitimate marriage, and the new non-Theosophical followers would continue to place him on a celibate pedestal.

Because the prospect of a non-celibate and non-chaste relationship was so unthinkable, very few were capable of suspecting anything more than mere friendship. Only Mme. de Manziarly (117-8) and Rosalind’s mother (133), Sophia, recognized the abnormality of this three-way relationship. Of course, the one person who witnessed the close bond between Rosalind and Krishnamurti was her daughter Radha, who writes of her experiences in 1937 when she was a little girl of seven:

Nor did I ever mention to anyone those frequent early mornings when from my bedroom window I saw Krishn, in the white raw silk nightshirts that my mother made for him, creeping up the stairs [of Arya Vihara] with a flower in his hand. Those were their times together, early mornings and sometimes late evenings, after I was supposed to be safely tucked away in bed. (147)

It was a liaison that resulted in three pregnancies: two culminating in abortions, one in a miscarriage. The first pregnancy was in 1935, and since Rosalind was warned that any future childbirth was life-threatening to her, the decision to abort was not particularly difficult. Krishnamurti, aware of the pregnancy and abortion, provided what comfort and compassion that was expected of him but not, apparently, any sense of responsibility. (132) A miscarriage occurred in the following year, on “an isolated field” somewhere between Hollywood and Ojai (141), the miscarriage brought on, it is conjectured by Mrs. Sloss, by a particularly upsetting argument between Krishnamurti and Rajagopal. As if this were not enough, a second abortion occurred in 1939. This was far more difficult to endure than the first, for by this time Rosalind contemplated having the baby. Krishna, however, ambiguously communicated his disapproval (“he never needed words to make his wishes clear”), so “again she got on the bus alone, he solicitous and loving as ever and giving her the same tender care when she returned.” (166)

The relationship continued throughout the period of the Second World War during which time Krishna remained at Ojai. Following his return from a trip to India in India, it appeared that a new woman entered his life— Nandini Mehta, and with it a sense of disloyalty. This was the first

crevice that appeared in their relationship, by 1953 resembling a marriage that was by then no longer beneficial for either party. Through it all, Rajagopal was completely ignorant of the affair until Rosalind, distressed over Krishnamurti's emotional involvement with another woman, finally revealed all to him in 1950, much to his own shock. (220) Krishnamurti in the following years never discussed the affair with Rajagopal as he promised Rosalind he would. (261) Rajagopal then came to realize Krishnamurti for what he was: a duplicitous figure that caused Rajagopal to gradually withdraw from his sphere. Years later Rajagopal told Mima Porter (née de Manziarly) that

he would have understand people falling in love, that was only human, but he could not understand Krishna leaving him in darkness all these years, while living a life so contrary to the life which Raja had believed he wished them all to live. (222)

By 1956 the relationship was effectively over, Krishna acceding to Rosalind's wishes to remain apart from her. In 1961, Rajagopal and Rosalind got a Mexican divorce after years of living separate lives. This allowed Rajagopal to marry a friend and associate (at the Happy Valley School) of Rosalind's, Annalisa Beghe.

The book then proceeds to the second major story, that of Krishnamurti's relations with Rajagopal. Rajagopal, born in 1900 in Tamil Nadu to a Vaishnavite Ayyangar brahmin family and to a theosophist father, was discovered by Leadbeater in 1913 as a possible vehicle for the Maitreya, in response to the growing rebelliousness (41) and jealousy of Krishna. One wonders if Krishna ever totally accepted Raja as a friend although the two were to become close associates in their mutual work: Rajagopal the loyal assistant and compan-

ion and Krishnamurti of course the teacher-philosopher. Years later (1966), Krishnamurti allegedly replied to the author's mother-in-law that he "was my friend but I was never his." (297)

Following the death of Nitya, Mrs. Besant asked Raja to take over the work of the Star¹⁰; one specific duty delegated to him was to organize the Star Camps at Ommen. After Krishnamurti dissolved the Order, Rajagopal remained with him "realizing not only his own dharma but also fulfilling the expectations that had been placed on him by Leadbeater and Mrs Besant." It was this sense of duty to the Work that led him to protect Krishnamurti against the muddles and messes he made. (237) Raja promised Nitya and made a commitment to Mrs. Besant that he would help Krishna in his work (103), this despite the fact that he was distressed by the "extreme bifurcation" in Krishnamurti's private behavior (*i.e.* towards Mrs. Besant and Leadbeater) and his public message." (102)

One of the themes of the book is Rajagopal's continued loyalty and commitment to Krishnamurti, despite the fact that there were serious altercations and arguments over the years resulting from Krishnamurti's "changeable personality that often led to misunderstandings between them and others" (134) and from his "lying and undercutting of [Rajagopal]." (135) The criticism that Rajagopal heaped upon Krishna was enough to cause Krishnamurti to retaliate by slapping Raja on more than one occasion (135).

By the 1950s trouble between the two became far more serious with Rosalind's revealing her affair with Krishnamurti to him and Krishna's subsequent suspicions of Rajagopal, thinking him (Raja) to have been taken over by

¹⁰ The Order of the Star in the East, renamed in 1927 the Order of the Star.

“black forces.” (273) Krishnamurti, the author contends, was actually afraid of him because of Raja’s knowledge of the liaison and so wanted him out of the way. (288)

This led Krishnamurti to accuse Raja behind his back of usurping his responsibilities, money and property. (288). By 1966, Krishnamurti again wanted to take over KWInc. (Krishnamurti Writings, Inc.), having originally resigned from it in 1958 and leaving the organization under Raja’s full responsibility as its founder. (287) Thus KWInc. was a publishing venture centered around, but not run by, Krishna. (287). The legal troubles between Rajagopal and Krishnamurti becomes more of a legal brief wherein the author assumes the position of advocate for her father. Readers may read about this crisis over KWInc. in Mary Luytens’ *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* and *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death* for an alternate account. The conflict between the two men led to a series of litigations that lasted even beyond Krishnamurti’s death. As related by Mrs. Sloss, Krishna accused Raja of barring him from KWInc. and of withholding and misappropriating funds intended for Krishna’s use (290). The dispute was further compounded by a six year battle over the Arya Vihara, the house in Ojai where Rosalind lived for many years. Krishnamurti intended it to be Rosalind’s home for the remainder of her life, after which it would then revert back to KWInc. (275) Because the non-profit status of the KWInc. prevented any property to be given to an individual, Raja found that the best method of carrying out Krishnamurti’s wishes was to turn the house over to the Happy Valley Foundation, of which Rosalind was a member, for her lifetime use. (275) This angered Krishna, who accused him of making arrangements behind his back. (291-3). Two letters from Rosalind to Krishna attempting to explain and resolve the

misunderstanding were unsuccessful. Krishna remained adamantly opposed to this arrangement.

Suspicious and accusations on Krishnamurti’s part (in 1964) and Rajagopal’s growing disillusionment with K. eventually led to K.’s initiating a complete break in their association in 1966. (297) The hatred generated led to the point of Krishna no longer speaking his name. (296) The irony of this observation is not lost on Mrs. Sloss, who observes that “he [K.] was not, in his own view of himself and that of his devotees, supposedly able to feel hatred.” (297)

According to Mrs. Sloss, in January 1968 Krishnamurti, “accompanied by members of his new circle” [their names are not mentioned], went in person to the Attorney-General’s office in L.A. to accuse Rajagopal of mismanaging funds. So the first legal step was taken in a series of actions that led to an out-of-court settlement in December 1974 (304-5) wherein KWInc. was dissolved with all assets transferred to the Krishnamurti Foundation of America (K.F.A.). The K & R Foundation (controlled by Rajagopal) was granted the copyright to all of Krishnamurti’s writings prior to 1 July 1968. Furthermore, the acreage in Ojai, including the Oak Grove and the land on which the Arya Vihara and Pine Cottage (the site where the ‘process’ took place in 1922) stood, was transferred to K.F.A. with Rajagopal being allowed to retain his house for life.¹¹ (305) After the settlement, Rosalind was asked to vacate the Arya Vihara by the same Krishnamurti who insisted that she was to live there for life.¹² (304)

¹¹ Luytens, *Krishnamurti: His Life and Death*, 131; Krishnamurti: *The Years of Fulfilment*, 201.

¹² Luytens, *Krishnamurti: The Years of Fulfilment* (205) gives no comment on this seeming breach of faith on the part of K. She only observes that Rosalind had left Arya Vihara “in a bad state of repair” and “denuded of almost all its furniture.”

Further legal actions, the issue being the papers and documents held by Rajagopal, were initiated in the 1980s which were not to end until after Krishnamurti's death. The outcome was in Rajagopal's favor: he was allowed to keep the documents, with this conclusion by Mrs. Sloss:

Whether or not such a settlement would have been possible during Krishna's lifetime is a moot point. It is certain he would not have fared well on the witness stand. Rosalind was spared the pain of such an appearance also, although she was prepared to go through with it. Sixteen years of litigation and three separate lawsuits all dropped at the final hour, hundreds of thousands of dollars that might have been spent on schools or publications, add up to a chronicle of waste. (322)

That *Lives in the Shadow with J. Krishnamurti* is - and should be - a most distressing book to those who consider him more than mere mortal is an understatement. If all the observations and allegations are even partially true, then we are witnessing here the dismantlement of the myth of Krishnamurti as religious hero: a status that was not only foisted upon him by the Theosophical leadership in his youth but even apparently accepted by himself to the very end of his life. Indeed, the artist Beatrice Wood, in a letter dated 22 February 1981, reports that rumors abound that "Krishnamurti is supposed to have said that he is even greater than Buddha or the Christ..." (307) Of course, the charge is only hearsay, but it tends to support some of the claims that Krishnamurti made of his status throughout his life.

In the sense of fair play and balance, however, the question must be raised on the motivation of the author in writing and publishing an account of a relationship and association that

was so intimate and damaging not only to Krishnamurti but also in some measure to her mother as well. Explanations are provided, but they only lead to further doubts and suspicions *re* deeper intent. In the Preface, Mrs. Sloss remarks that recent biographies and a biographical film "left areas, and a large span of years, in mysterious darkness." Therefore, the book was written because it "is not in the interest of historical integrity, especially where such a personality is concerned, that there be these areas of obscurity." (ix) In the final pages of the book, the impetus came from none other than Rosalind herself. In an effort to make Krishnamurti drop a lawsuit (the latest in what was apparently an unrelenting period of strife that lasted over twenty years) against her now former husband, Rosalind "wrote a complete and detailed account of her relationship with Krishna" (313) and sent it to K. so that he would realize the damage that could be done to him if a court trial would actually take place. Despite the fact that the lawsuit was withdrawn in 1983, Rosalind was fearful that the letter would be misused at some future time, and so the decision was made to reveal the whole truth. Her effort to defend Rajagopal against the charges brought against him by Krishnamurti in the interest of justice finally dictated her decision to reveal the hidden past. But with the death of Krishnamurti in 1986 and the subsequent resolution of the lawsuit that cleared Rajagopal of any wrongdoing would render the reason for this book moot. A caveat to this whole issue must be considered: legal acquittal, however significant, does not make up for the injustice and anguish experienced by her father. In the light of past and future biographies of Krishnamurti passing a less than favorable judgement on the author's parents, it does not take a leap of imagination to conclude that the book is primarily intended to restore a

more balanced interpretation of their long relationship. In so doing, the lesson learned from this book is that one cannot judge the main characters in terms of black and white or good and evil. Krishnamurti was far from the perfect being that his devoted followers believed him to be, nor was Rajagopal the scurrilous villain that these same followers believe he was. Indeed, the “Shadow” appearing in the title reveals Mrs. Sloss’ view of the relationships between K. and those near him.

One obvious issue must be raised apropos the subject of the book: is all of it true? There is no incontrovertible evidence that can convince those who have already made up their minds vis-à-vis Krishnamurti’s character. The love relationship described herein is primarily based on the revelations made to the author by her mother. As compelling as the attestation is, charges such as this in a court of law would never stand up to the rules of evidence. Documentation is necessary, but as the author correctly points out copyright laws prevent publication of a person’s letters without permission from the writer or his literary estate. The letters of Krishnamurti to Rosalind Rajagopal, in the author’s possession, would have been the intended documentation establishing beyond any doubt the facts surrounding the relationship. This is but one instance of many in recent years that illustrates the difficulty that historians face in their effort to present a complete documentation of their subject of investigation. The impetus of this application of the fair-use defense of the copyright originates in the highly controversial case of *Salinger v. Random House, Inc*, which, according to R.A. Gorman, “creates a significant risk of chilling serious scholarship.”¹³

¹³ A discussion of the case appears in Robert A. Gorman’s “Copyright and the Professoriate: A Primer and Some Recent Developments,” *Academe* 73 (Sept.–Oct. 1987): 29–33, esp. 33. My thanks to Mr. R.E. Mark Lee of the Krishnamurti Foundation of America for supplying me with this article.

As for the legal altercation between Krishnamurti and Rajagopal, it is impossible to determine the guilt or innocence of the parties. I must admit to considerable confusion as one who knew nothing of the litigation and bad blood between the two. On the side of Krishnamurti one can read the somewhat truncated account in Sidney Field’s memoir (101f.), and of course, Mrs. Sloss’ interpretation of the events in Rajagopal’s favor. It is not up to this reviewer to decide who is right or wrong; no decision can be reached since the evidence is far from conclusive on either side. Furthermore, there still exists too much emotional content on both sides to allow an impartial observer to arrive at a substantive and informed decision. If this issue is of importance, the reader should retain an open mind and await further evidence or examine the court transcripts before making any judgement in the matter.

Lives in the Shadow with J Krishnamurti is a book that should be read by all as an abject lesson on the dangers of dealing with personalities who either claim to be the disclosers of Truth or *accept* the adulation of his (or her) votaries. It is becoming more and more obvious to me that studies of religious or spiritual communities require not only profile studies of leaders and founders of religious movements but also of their audiences, consisting usually of so-called true believers and of less committed but nonetheless influenced auditors of the leader. Studies do exist but not enough attention are paid to them. It seems to me that Mrs. Sloss’ memoir, besides revealing the flawed personality of Krishnamurti, sheds some light in establishing personality profiles of his devotees. What those lessons are should be best left to experts to determine.

Finally, what of the consequence of the messenger or teacher failing to replicate the message? Does the failure of the messenger

invalidate the message? In the Hindu teaching tradition, there is a common observation that the instruction is important, not the teacher or guru. Words have power independent of the speaker, and this is made quite explicit in the Mīmāṃsā, Yoga, Grammarian, and Tantric traditions of India. The words uttered by Krishnamurti may not be likened to mantras by the majority of his listeners, but they certainly are considered to be authoritative and powerful enough to serve as vehicles of transformation. As a result, I would not expect this book to destroy the impact of Krishnamurti's teachings. It is becoming clear that the teachings will take on a life of their own, divorced from the personality of the teacher in much the same way that most listeners are appreciative and attracted to the music of Wagner without associating it with the unpardonable qualities of the composer's character.¹⁴

¹⁴ An overview of the mantra is presented in Harold Coward's and David Goa's *Mantra: Hearing the Divine in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Books, 1991).